Dentist, nephew rescued from kidnappers in Sulu

Story on PAGE A17

7 spies, 2 diplomats, 2 GIs killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Guerrillas killed two US soldiers and wounded a third in an ambush in western Iraq, a military statement said on Sunday. A day earlier, seven Spanish intelligence agents and two Japanese diplomats died in separate attacks near Baghdad.

With the latest deaths, guerrillas have killed 106 coalition troops in Iraq in

7 SPIES/ A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

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  BUSINESS /B1
- **Aussies win Davis Cup**
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- **Oil cartel, Russia on verge of cold war**
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82

BSP chief blamed for peso fall

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IT'S Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura—not popular actor Fernando Poe Jr.—who is to blame for the peso's rapid fall, according to Jose L. Cuisia Jr. who headed the central bank in the early 1990s.

Buenaventura, however, rebutted Cuisia's allegations, saying many peso speculators have been penalized. He added that Cuisia "should stick to selling insurance."

Cuisia, chair of Philippine American Life Insurance Co. (Philamlife), yesterday told the INQUIRER that the peso dropped to record lows because Buenaventura had refused to crack down on speculators.

"Why is he [Buenaventura] saying that the BSP will go after speculators only now? He doesn't even have to say it ... He must go after them all the time and really hit them the only way that they would understand—through their pockets," Cuisia said.

Cuisia said Buenaventura had all the tools at his disposal to make it harder for speculators to attack the peso amid rising political and economic uncertainties.

"He can send a message that the BSP would not tolerate any speculative attack on the peso by raising the cost of attacking the peso. But since the speculators are making so much money, the peso will continue to be vulnerable," Cuisia said.

"No bank or trader has been made to pay stiff penalties for attacks on the peso" despite Buenaventura's warnings he would

BSP/ A21

Roco: Let's change this administration

Ex-senator Alyansa ng Pag-asa presidential bet

FORMER Sen. Raul Roco delivers his fighting words after he was proclaimed a presidential candidate by his followers during a convention at the Folk Arts Theater.

ERIK ARAZAS

AT THE OFFICIAL launching of his quest for the presidency, former Sen. Raul Roco yesterday fired a broadside at his rivals, targeting first President Macapagal-Arroyo whose administration he said "is not up to the task and should be changed."

Roco, who once served as education secretary under Ms Macapagal, accused the President of being too preoccupied with politicking, noting that she used the visits of boxing champion Manny Pacquiao and singer Mandy Moore to gain media mileage.

"But let's not replace it (administration) with one that's not prepared," Roco said in his speech, obviously referring to actor Fernando Poe Jr., a presidential aspirant who has no experience in public office.

Before a crowd of some 10,000 supporters at the Folk Arts Theater in Pasay City, Roco proclaimed his readiness to lead the country.

"We need a decent leadership that is competent," said Roco, a consistent front-runner in surveys of presidential aspirants.

He told business leaders on the eve of his announcement that if chosen to lead one of Asia's most vibrant democracies, he would outperform Singapore statesman Lee Kuan Yew and just-retired Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, both highly credited with modernizing their economies.

"Ten years from now, they (Singaporeans and Malaysians) will all say how we wish we had a Raul Roco in Malaysia and Singapore."

ROCO/ A20

HE'S TRUE-BLUE PINOY–SOTTO

Lakas exec questions FPJ citizenship

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Christine O. Avendaño

IS "Panday" an American citizen, and a tax evader at that? The ruling Lakas-CMD party wants to know.

In an interview with RMN radio, Lakas spokesperson Heherson Alvarez urged presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr. to come clean on issues concerning his citizenship and his tax remittances as an actor-producer.

But the action star, most famous for his "Ang Panday" movies, is a true-blue Filipino and a "national hero," Senate Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III countered.

"Obviously, Poe running for president has sparked fear in the hearts and minds of some people," Sotto, a member of the LDP and a Poe supporter, told the INQUIRER.

Alvarez said it should be easy for Poe to prove his citizenship based on his past transactions that would show whether he had represented himself as a Filipino or an American.

Poe is the son of a Filipino father and an American mother, and there are reports that he was born in the United States.

Alvarez said Poe's citizenship was a critical issue, considering that the Constitution specifies that only natural-born Filipinos can be president.

He said that equally important were Poe's tax payment records with the Bureau of Internal Revenue. "As the president, you should lead by example by following the country's laws, specifically the payment of the right taxes. Tax evasion is a black mark on a person's integrity," he said.

Alvarez said it was up to Poe and not Lakas-CMD to refute the questions regarding his citizenship and taxes.

But Sotto said Poe was a "national hero" of sorts because he opted to be a Filipino citizen while his four siblings chose to be American citizens.

"So you can see he is a man with a sense of nationalism ... because at 25, he could have elected to become an American citizen but he did not," the opposition senator said.

Poe's no-show at the 29th Philippine Business Conference on Saturday has added to the doubts about the seriousness of his presidential bid.

"His no-show makes one wonder if he is truly serious or if he has entered the political arena half-heartedly," administration Sen. Francis Pangilinan said yesterday.

LAKAS / A8

Poe bid likely to self-destruct

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE PRESIDENTIAL bid of actor Fernando Poe Jr. is showing signs of imploding, just days after he announced his candidacy for the 2004 elections on Wednesday.

Poe made the announcement amid the most inauspicious circumstances. He did it unilaterally and without official opposition blessings.

The main opposition party, the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), is still locked in the process of selecting the standard-bearer of the "united" opposition and has not yet completed its "road show" that was intended to crystallize the sentiments of its rank and file.

Showing disrespect for and impatience over the process, the politically inexperi-

POE BID/ A10

A PATIENT, who is participating in a control group experiment on AIDS treatment, walks to his quarters at the Ecarma Wellness Center in Pililia, Rizal.

EGAY MONTANA

Persons with AIDS find haven, hope

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PILILIA, Rizal—If stories of kindhearted people saving stray animals and treating them as their own amaze you, wait till you meet retired pilot Virgilio Ecarma and his wife, Teresa.

For five years now, the couple have been taking care of people afflicted with the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) in their home in Parañaque City and their farm in this Rizal town. Childless, the Ecarmas said they have been "treating the AIDS patients like our own children."

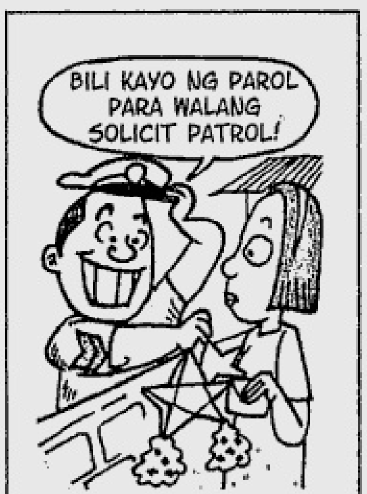
To accommodate his "growing family," Ecarma decided to develop and turn their supposed-to-be retirement place in Barangay Halayhayin here into a haven for AIDS patients. The Ecarma Wellness Center is now home to four patients with full-blown AIDS who are undergoing "rehabilitation" without paying a single cent.

Ecarma's involvement with AIDS victims happened serendipitously.

In October 1998, while he was trying to convince officials of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) to allow AIDS patients to try his narra tea concoction, he came across Rey, an HIV patient.

"Mang Rey told me that he had

PERSONS/ A4


BILI KAYO NG PAROL PARA WALANG SOLICIT PATROL!

Project puts cops out of extort's way

By Christian V. Esguerra

TIRED of policemen doing the rounds in your neighborhood for cash and goodies during Christmas?

To keep police officers from spoiling the season's festive spirit, the Philippine National Police has outlawed the practice beginning this year.

But no Scrooge, PNP chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. gave his men an alterna-

PROJECT/ A20

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/01/03

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Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
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Second FRONTPAGE

Militants threaten action vs ID

By Alcuin Papa, Christine Avendaño, Carlito Pablo and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

MILITANTS are up in arms against the proposed national ID system, branding it a plot to kill human rights and the civil liberties of the Filipino people. They also threatened to go back to the streets to protest the "repressive" measure.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) predicted yesterday that the proposed ID system will face stiff opposition in Congress and in the parliament of the streets.

"The proposed national ID system will be challenged in the streets, in the Supreme Court and the court of public opinion," said Pamalakaya spokesperson Gerry Corpuz.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is strongly pushing for a national ID, has asked Congress to prioritize the passage of the National ID System Act.

Pamalakaya said that if the law is passed, militant groups, human rights advocates and civil liberty organizations " will not hesitate to go back to the streets to oppose the draconian measure, like they did in 1998 during the Ramos administration."

Former President Fidel Ramos was among the original proponents of a single ID system as part of the government's security and counter-insurgency measures.

But it was shot down after the Supreme Court ruled that it was a "clear and present danger" and would violate a person's right to privacy which is guaranteed and made "inviolable" by the Constitution.

Corpuz said that an ID system is tantamount to placing the entire nation under a police state, adding it would allow the government, military and police to invade the social, economic and political life of any person.

The scheme, Corpuz said, might be used by Ms Macapagal "to harass and coerce the people into voting for her or to manipulate the results of the May 2004 elections."

Surveillance

"A nation of more than 80 million people will be placed under round-the-clock surveillance by the state and this is extremely dangerous, evil and above all immoral," Corpuz said.

He belittled the President's claim that the national ID system will be used to fight terrorism and curb the rise of criminality in the country.

According to Corpuz, the system will be used to "prey on civilians and to conduct a witch-hunt of groups and persons critical and opposed to her (Ms Macapagal)."

Two senators, however, favor a national ID system but have different views on how government should implement it.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the President could issue an executive order consolidating into one all IDs like the social security card, voter's ID, and tax account number, among others.

"All she has to do is integrate all existing IDs into one, by using the social security number as the anchor number since this has the widest base," Drilon said.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who filed a similar bill in the 9th Congress, said the President could implement the ID system on her own but he stressed that Congress should be the one to legislate it.

Both Drilon and Biazon also allayed fears the ID system would be used as an oppressive instrument.

"It's a necessary component of an orderly society," Biazon said.

Local system

Not waiting for Congress to act on its own, Ms Macapagal the other day urged provincial board members to pass ordinances for local ID systems.

At the Lower House, a congressman yesterday said the proposed national ID system may do little to deter crime and terrorism, unless the police had firearms to begin with.

Rep. Joseph Durano (NPC, Cebu), chair of the House committee on public order and security, said that half of the country's policemen did not have government-issued firearms.

He said this lack of firearms "affects the capability of policemen to carry out their peace and order tasks, especially with the upsurge in kidnapping and drug smuggling cases."

Durano blamed the lack to the failure of the Department of Budget and Management to release P840 million this year for the Philippine National Police.

In Lucena City, a top communist leader assailed the President for pushing a single national ID system, calling it a "futile act, invasion of privacy and violation of human rights."

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, said the single ID system would only be a source of graft and corruption.

Barbers thinks he's VP pick; Drilon may run

By Tarra Quismundo and Raj Padilla, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

ADMINISTRATION Sen. Robert Barbers yesterday expressed confidence he will be President Macapagal-Arroyo's running mate in 2004, saying they would make a good team.

"I think I can complement the President. She (could work) more on economics, and I could focus on peace and order," said Barbers. "She is from Luzon, I am from Mindanao. And I have the experience and the loyalty," he added. Barbers has been a top police official, a congressman and a Cabinet member.

But this early, Barbers may have a potential rival in Senate President Franklin Drilon, who hinted yesterday that he may also run for vice president next year.

"We should always be ready, but the matter for VP is for the presidential candidate and the party to consider," Drilon said in Iloilo City, when asked about his political plans during the public affairs program Reklamo Publiko telecast from the Barcelo Sarabia Manor Hotel and Convention Center.

Confident

Barbers said he was confident a tandem with Ms Macapagal will happen, as members of his party, the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, have unanimously chosen him to be the party's vice presidential bet.

He said he will know before Dec. 15 whether he will be officially chosen as Ms Macapagal's running mate.

Two days after he was sworn in as chair of the Liberal Party, Drilon hinted that he was open to a possible vice presidential bid next year.

Drilon arrived in Iloilo City Saturday to attend the 80th birthday celebration of his mother at their ancestral home in Molo district.

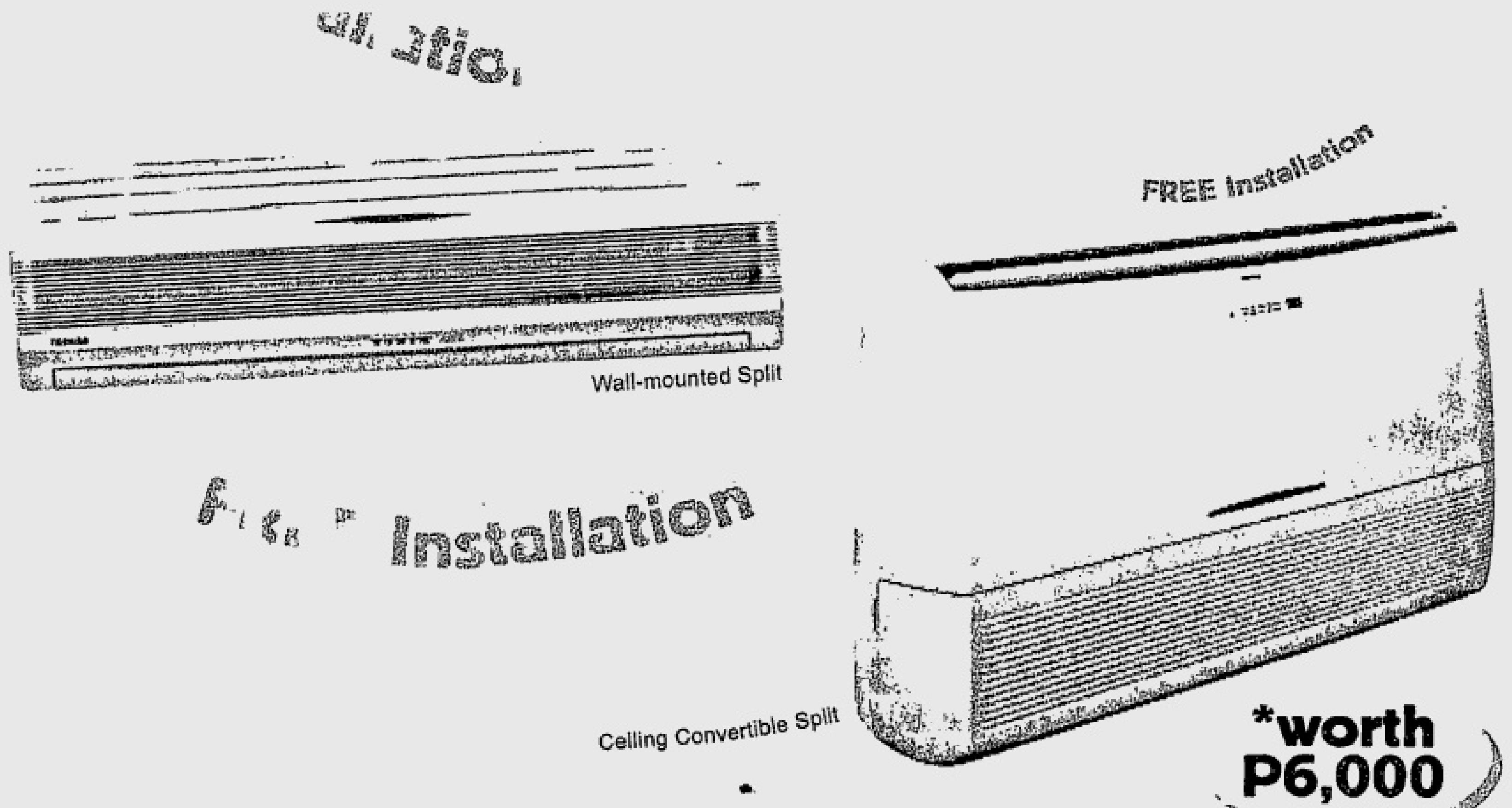
Up till yesterday, the Senate president had been mum about any vice presidential plans.

Drilon said he did not join the LP so he could be a candidate for higher office, but because he believes in the principles the party espouses.

He said that during his watch, the LP would push for political reforms and introduce measures to strengthen the political party system.

Drilon said it was high time for political parties to consider choosing their candidates on the basis of qualifications and not on sheer popularity alone.

In what appeared to be a kick-off of his campaign, Barbers led in the launching of Kilos Kontra Krimen. a coalition of anti-crime organizations and the police, in Manila yesterday.



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Left may provide swing vote in 2004

By Carlito Pablo and Norman Bordadora

AFTER ITS disastrous decision to boycott the 1986 snap elections, the mainstream Left is poised to play a major role in the 2004 presidential polls, and could even provide the crucial swing vote that would ensure victory for their favored presidential candidate.

With the ratings of the presidential aspirants closely bunched together and no one having a clear track to Malacañang, an endorsement by the Left could spell the difference in the May 2004 elections.

Rep. Satur Ocampo, national president of the Bayan Muna party-list group, yesterday said the "mainstream leftist movement might throw the support of its close to two million supporters behind the national candidate whose program of action would come close to their leanings on political and economic issues."

Ocampo's boast is not without basis. In the 2001 party-list elections, Bayan Muna clinched an "unprecedented" 1.7 million votes nationwide, the biggest by a party-list group since the party-list system was introduced in Congress.

Ocampo said the Left would decide whom to support before Bayan Muna holds its national convention on Jan. 13.

"The candidate we will endorse will definitely be invited as the guest of honor in our party convention," Ocampo said.

Ocampo said the Left's criteria include "having a high standard of personal integrity, being nationalistic, and an advanced economic outlook."

The last criterion means, according to Ocampo, "sharing more of the country's wealth with the poor through land reform and implementing a living wage for workers."

"For formality's sake," according to Ocampo, the Left's choices include movie actor Fernando Poe Jr., former Education Secretary Raul Roco, opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson and President Macapagal-Arroyo.

It will be recalled that the Left adopted a boycott policy during the 1986 snap elections called by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos. Corazon Aquino, widow of the martyred Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, challenged the dictator through the ballot.

The boycott marginalized the Left from the events that lead up to 1986 Edsa revolt that booted out Marcos and installed Mrs. Aquino as the new president.

Ocampo, however, noted that the selection process would be "no easy task."

"We are not ruling out the possibility that we will not endorse a presidential candidate at all if none of the candidates would meet the standards that various militant groups will collectively set," he said.

Ocampo said they were "disappointed" with the platforms of government presented over the weekend before businessmen by Roco and Lacson.

"Their declared programs of action are bereft of specific objectives and applications," Ocampo said.

Ocampo said the Left has formed a "national electoral council," which has been "monitoring the presidential aspirants and will be tasked to come up with an initial assessment on the track records and campaign platforms of the declared candidates."

As this developed, the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan yesterday said the platforms presented by Roco and Lacson before the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Saturday were almost the same.

"Whether it's Roco's education or Lacson's peace and order, it doesn't really make much of a difference. Which candidate would say that he is against education or peace and order," Bayan secretary general Teodoro Casiño said.

INT'L SINGING CHAMPS

President Macapagal-Arroyo receives the grand prize trophy won by the Loboc Children's Choir at the recent "Europe and Its Songs" international competition held in Barcelona, Spain. The group from the Loboc Central Elementary School in Bohol also won first prize in the children's category. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Miriam goes back on vow, supports FPJ

By Jerry Esplanada

BARELY a week after declaring she was done with politics, former Sen. Miriam Santiago has thrown herself into the game anew, pledging support for actor Fernando Poe Jr.'s presidential bid.

"*Makikisangga ako dito dahil ginagalang ko ang nanay n'ya* (I will get involved because I respect his mother)," Santiago said the other night on ABS-CBN's "Kontrobersyal," claiming Elizabeth Kelly Poe was a close friend.

The fiery lawyer volunteered to represent FPJ in public debates against other candidates.

"Let's see if his opponents are as intelligent as they say they are," she said in emphatic Filipino. Then she looked straight at the camera and addressed those opponents. "You say Ronnie Poe knows nothing. All right, I'll face you for him."

Santiago had apparently forgotten that, in an INQUIRER interview last July 11, she described Poe as "incompetent" and "not qualified for public office."

She told this reporter: "I call incompetent anyone in the entertainment industry ... movies, TV, radio, print, theater, sports." It was "nothing personal," she said, and vowed to "oppose the candidacy of any entertainer, out of sheer principle."

Two-and-a-half months after the July interview, Poe and his wife, actress Susan Roces, were among dinner guests at the Santiagos' new La Vista subdivision house in Quezon City.

Speaking on Nov. 21 at the wake of her son Alexander Robert, Santiago had announced she was "removing myself from politics to fulfill my promise (to AR)." She said her "baby" had always objected to her political career.

AR, the younger of her two sons with Narciso Santiago Jr., former interior secretary, had been found dead in his room with a gunshot wound in the head. Police declared it a suicide.

Last Saturday, the old Miriam Santiago was back and roaring, defending Poe against critics, including herself. Where previously she had demanded university degrees of all aspirants for government positions, now she found justification for FPJ's failure to finish college.

"He was working, providing for his widowed mother and his siblings," she said.

'Filled with anger'

During the TV interview, Santiago also admitted she was still "filled with anger" over AR's death. "I wanted to shoot myself, too," she said.

The young man's troubles reportedly started when he failed the interview for admission to the University of the Philippines College of Law. He was enrolled at the Ateneo de Manila University at the time of his suicide.

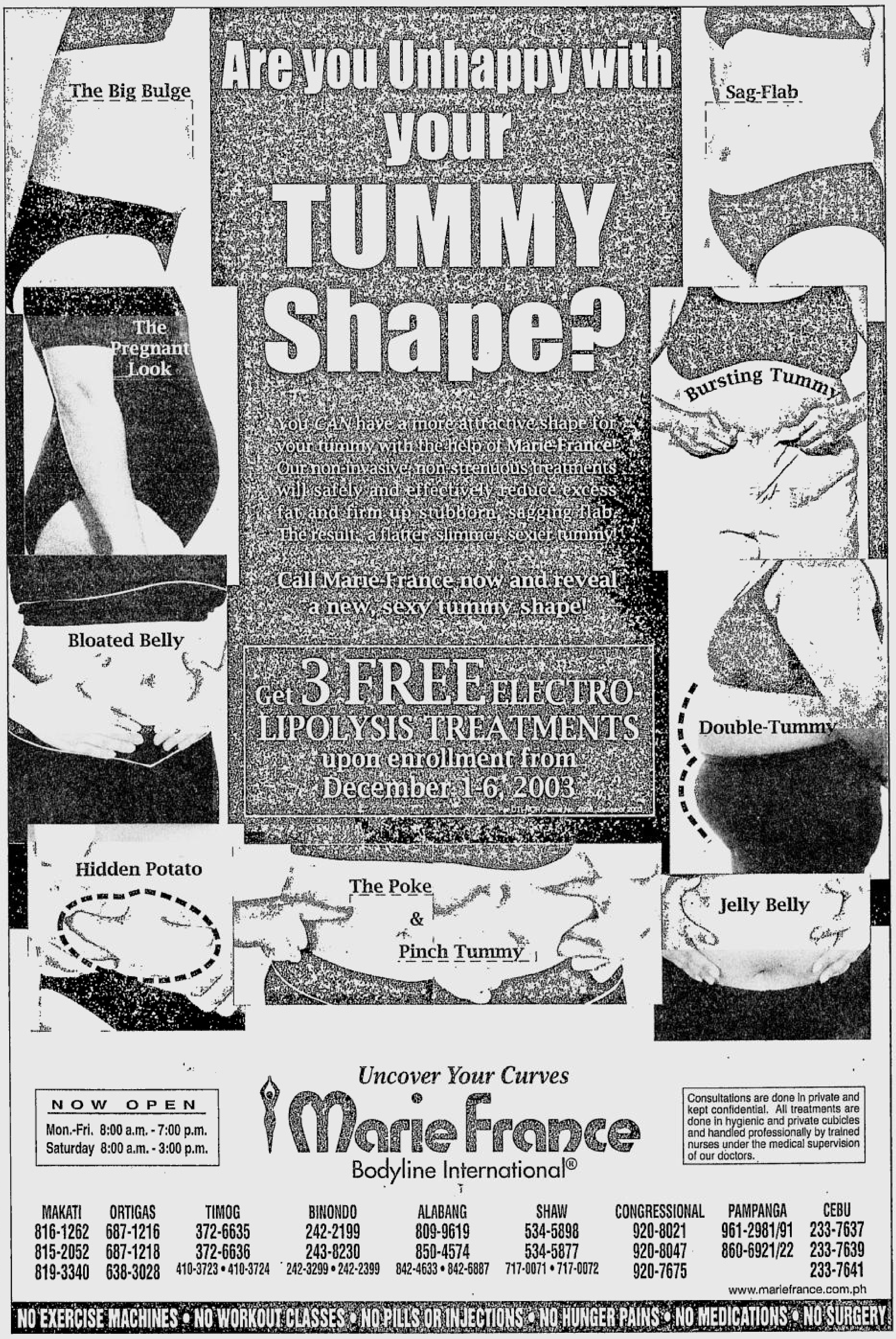
Blaming members of the UPCL panel for their "true and genuine arrogance of academic pretension," Santiago demanded: "Why did you take it out on my son? It is I that you want to destroy."

She warned the faculty members who had voted against AR's admission: "Be careful. Pray that my faith in God restrains me."

On the day of the TV interview, the ex-immigration commissioner and Quezon City judge recalled, she was up at 4 a.m. "I sat in the garden, cleaning my gun," she said. "Anger consumed me. I thought I should confront those professors, one by one, in front of their students."

Those "emotionally disturbed individuals" should not be allowed to torment people, Santiago insisted. They had "attacked" AR, she said, with questions like, "What is your reaction to the charge that your mother is insane?"

Santiago said the panelists did this all the time, singling out children of public figures from among the applicants, "so they could humiliate them. My goodness, they dare call themselves learned people."



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Narra tea study 'preliminary'

IT'S too early to conclude that the Ecarma tea has a therapeutic effect on HIV patients, according to the head of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine's AIDS Research Group.

Dr. Rosanna Ditangco said the group's one-year "Pilot Study on the Possible Immune Enhancing Effect of the Narra Tea as a Food Supplement" started only in February. She said it would take the group until June next year before it could come up with a scientific assessment of the tea.

After explaining the method to be used in the project, 15 of Ditangco's more than 200 HIV patients voluntarily agreed to take part in the study, which she described as "very preliminary."

The participants are those who have not yet taken the retroviral medicines. The volunteers must also have a CD4 count of over 200 and are in the early stage of HIV infection.

She said the volunteers were complying with the regimen set by Virgilio Ecarma, who came up with the concoction derived from the narra tree. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

WORLD AIDS DAY

UN, partners launch '3 by 5' campaign

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE WORLD Health Organization has warned that Asia is creating an environment for the easy spread of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which has killed nearly 30 million people worldwide, because of the climate of fear and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS.

Dr. Shigeru Omi, WHO director for the Western Pacific, said the ostracism suffered by HIV patients in Asia has discouraged people from determining their HIV status and getting treatment.

"Blaming people and making moral judgments do not help stop the disease from spreading," Omi said in a statement. He met with Filipinos with HIV and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), and concerned groups at the WHO regional office in Manila on Thursday.

"In fact, the disease can further spread because stigmatized groups tend to become more hidden and opportunities for giving them treatment and information are lost," Omi said.

The WHO, along with partners like the United Nations Program on AIDS (Unaids), will launch today in time for the World AIDS Day celebration the "3 by 5 campaign," a joint project that seeks to give three million people living with HIV/AIDS access to anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment by 2005.

Persons with AIDS find haven, hope

From page A1

been taking narra tea for two weeks. He said the tea helped his wounds and other skin diseases dry up in such a short time. Then I said, 'This is it,'" Ecarma narrated.

The good news "signaled something big" for Ecarma, after doctors at the research hospital repeatedly refused to let him carry out trials with his "invention"—a tea made from the crushed bark of the narra tree.

"The man was the first AIDS patient who affirmed the beneficial effects of narra tea to persons like him. It really beefed up my conviction that the tea could be a lot of help to those suffering from this incurable disease," Ecarma said.

By that time, he knew he had somehow won over some medical practitioners in the RITM and H4 Pavilion, a station at the San Lazaro Hospital that takes care of AIDS and HIV-positive patients.

Everything positive about narra tea seemed to happen to Ecarma at unexpected times.

Labor strike

One such moment was the 1998 labor strike at Philippine Air Lines, where Ecarma worked for 32 years as a pilot until he retired that year. He said the dispute allowed him to spend more time doing research on his concoction.

He used his and his wife's savings to fund several laboratory and toxicity tests on narra tea, which he had accidentally discovered in 1991.

While looking for an alternative medicine to cure his rheumatoid arthritis, he stumbled upon a news story about the potential health benefits of the mahogany tree to people like him.

After reading the story, Ecarma asked his neighbor for a branch of the narra so he could prove the veracity of the supposed benefits of the tropical tree.

"What I did was to cut a portion of the branch and boil it until I came up with a tea mixture which I drank. The swelling and pain (caused by my arthritis) were gone a day after I took it," Ecarma narrated.

But he said he mistook the Philippine national tree for the mahogany tree. "I never had any idea what the mahogany looked like. So I thought it was narra in Tagalog. But it doesn't matter anymore," he said.

He noticed that narra tea boosted the immune system after some relatives and friends who tried it recovered from several diseases. That observation led him to infer that the tea could help persons suffering from AIDS and HIV.

Patience

Ecarma said the RITM and San Lazaro doctors didn't let him work with the hospitals. "I know their doubts came from the fact that the tea hadn't gone through a thorough study yet. But it didn't let me down," he said.

He tried to work as a social worker to gain access to the patients. But still the doctors wouldn't let him.

Then he found out that the wife of a former co-worker at PAL was working as a pathologist at the RITM. He met with his friend and asked if he could talk to his wife, Dr. Agnes Barrientos.

"Dr. Barrientos advised me to attend a seminar, which I did. She then introduced me to Dr. Ofelia Monson, the head consultant of the RITM for AIDS, who then allowed the trial of narra tea on AIDS patients," Ecarma said.

Nurses at the hospital told him that some AIDS patients have been doing great shortly after taking narra tea, Ecarma said.

San Lazaro

However, after a few months of clinical trials, Ecarma received a letter from the RITM telling him that the narra tea trials would be terminated. No reason was given in the letter.

Puzzled by the turn of events, he wrote a letter to then Health Secretary Carmencita Reodica. Reodica endorsed him to Dr. Perla Alban, head of the research department of the San Lazaro Hospital, who allowed him to work with 60 patients at the H4.

But because of hospital rules, Ecarma failed to conduct the trials. Undaunted, he asked the doctors at San Lazaro if he could work with AIDS patients by bringing them to his house.

"The doctor said 'it's OK' because the hospital has no control over that. So what I did was to find patients who would commit to rehabilitation using only narra tea," he said.

Adoption

Luckily, a man suffering from AIDS called him up and inquired about the narra tea. The caller then agreed to be Ecarma's first "in-house" patient.

The patient, nicknamed Buboy, stayed for two-and-a-half months with the Ecarmas in Parañaque. Another couple afflicted with the disease also stayed with them.

The results of the "rehabilitation" were dramatic when Buboy gained 20 pounds. In two weeks, the once frail patient could walk without being supported.

Believing that his mission had just begun, Ecarma thought of helping more AIDS patients. To accommodate them, he sought help from government to convert his three-hectare farm lot here into a sanctuary for AIDS patients.

Atop a hill

A 3-km rough road from the main highway leads to the lot, located atop a hill. The place overlooks the rice plains in the southern part of Laguna and Rizal.

Through the Department of Science and Technology's Inventors' Guarantee Fund program, Ecarma was able to avail himself of a P10-million loan that he used to develop the farm in 2001. He purchased an adjacent one-hectare property where a factory producing narra tea is now located.

With 10 huts, Ecarma said the sanctuary could accommodate 18 patients. "Because of their sensitive situation, the patients should have a buddy whom they could talk to. I have also reserved a cottage for volunteers who work as counselors," he said.

"I have also taught them how to meditate so they could control their emotions. I know they need to have the courage to fight the virus," Ecarma said.

The center has planted the farm to fruits and vegetables, without using pesticides and other chemicals, to complement the high-protein diet of the patients. Free-range native chickens also provide a good source of chemical-free eggs for them.

Like a loving father, Ecarma has provided the patients with cellular phones so they could communicate with their friends and relatives. "What they need most is the support of their families," he said.

Alternative

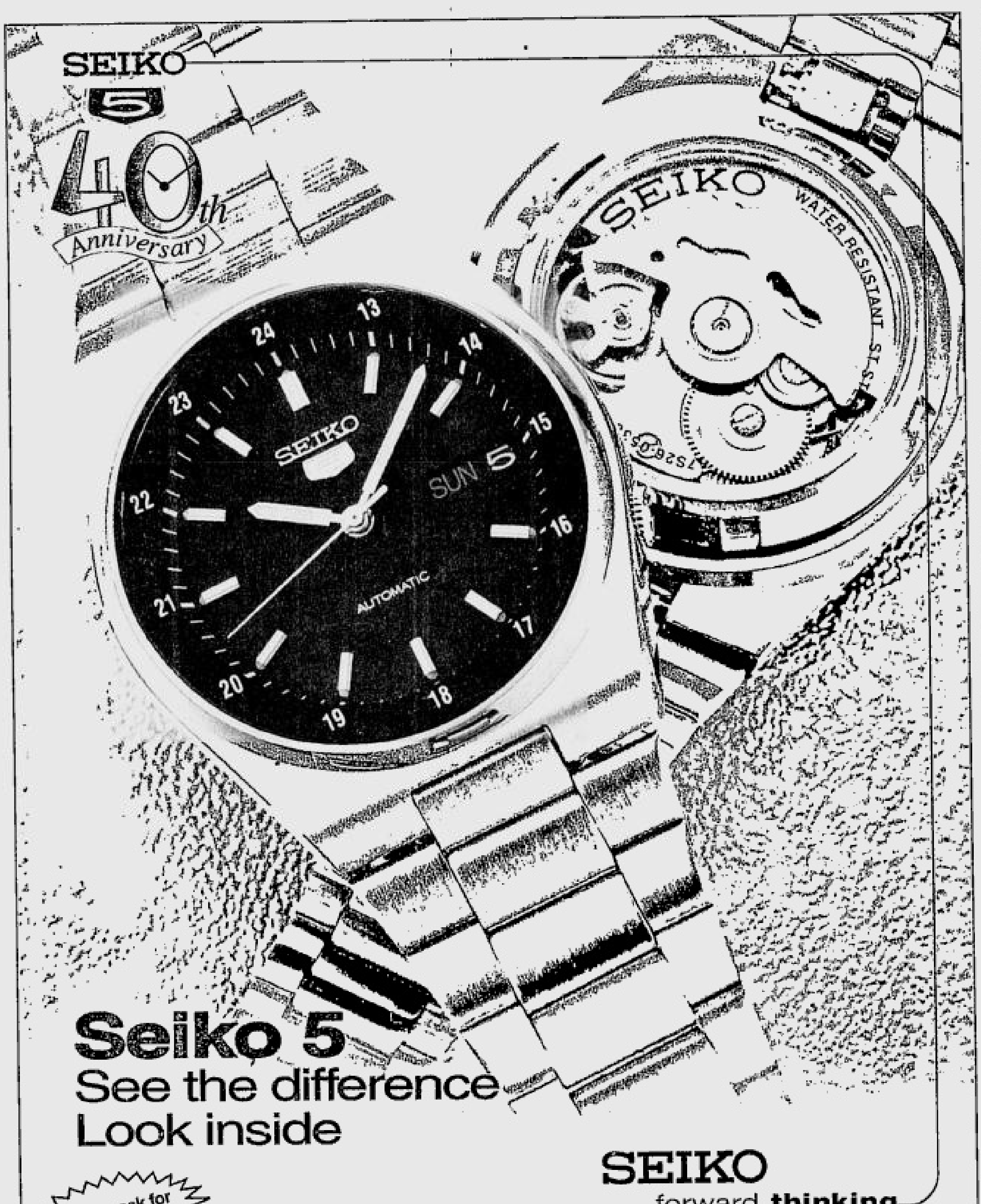
Dexter, a former make-up artist who has been suffering from AIDS for 14 years, attested to the "amazing healing powers" of the center and the tea. He was the first "adopted son" of the Ecarmas to stay at the Wellness Center.

After spending several months in H4, Dexter thought it would be best for him to try what Ecarma had to offer. He said he had "almost given up until Mr. Ecarma offered help."

"My family could not pay anymore for my retroviral drugs. I couldn't even walk a five-foot distance," Dexter narrated.

In over a month, he gained almost 30 pounds at the center.

Three days after drinking the tea, the wounds in his mouth and throat were healed, he said.



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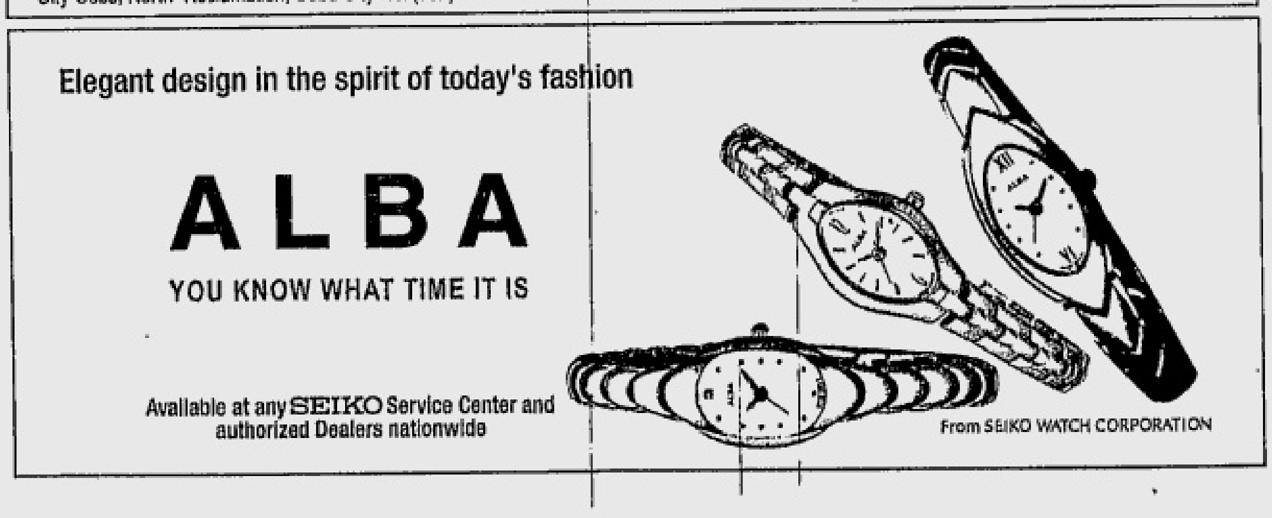
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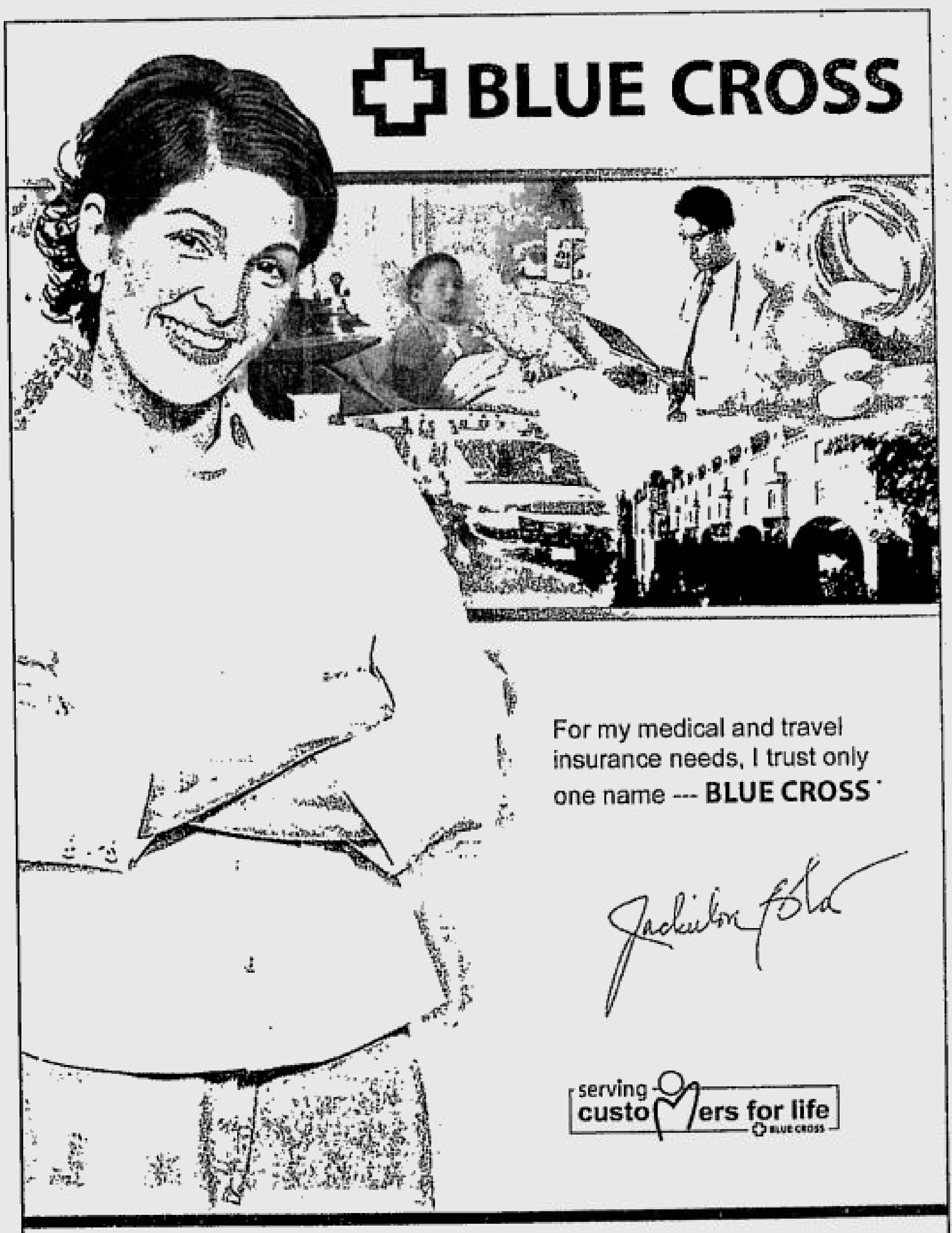

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Ex-intel chief reclaiming old PNP post

By Christian Esguerra

A FORMER chief of intelligence is set to make a comeback as the top spy in the much-anticipated Philippine National Police revamp this week.

Described by his peers as "one of the best intelligence officers ever," Director Robert Delfin is currently police regional director for Central Visayas. Prior to that, he was chief of the directorate for intelligence, a post he will now reassume to help boost the PNP's campaign against terrorism, three top police officials told the INQUIRER.

Delfin will replace Chief Supt. Arturo Lomibao, who is reportedly being groomed to head the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

"His return is strategic for the PNP," one of the three sources said of Delfin. "His experience and expertise are needed at a time when terrorist threats are high."

Delfin is one of the few non-Philippine Military Academy graduates who have risen to highly sensitive ranks. He joined the police service in 1972 as part of the 5th Constabulary Security Unit. Among his key accomplishments was the capture of former communist leader Rodolfo "Kumander Bilog" Salas in 1986.

Another Camp Crame source said Delfin's return was not intended as a demotion for Lomibao, himself an accomplished intelligence official. "The CIDG is one of the most sought-after units (and is) considered a mini-PNP," the source said.

Should Lomibao land the CIDG post, another source said, its current head Eduardo Matillano might be promoted to chief of the directorate for intelligence and detective management.

What might keep Matillano at the CIDG, the source said, was his being the government's main complainant in the coup charges against Sen. Gregorio Honasan and the Estrada family in connection with the failed July 27 Oakwood mutiny.

"Unlike other PNP officials," the source claimed, "Matillano is not afraid to clash head-on with the enemies of the administration, such as Honasan and (Sen. Panfilo) Lacson."

Another top police official expected to be affected by the massive revamp is Deputy Director Gen. Reynaldo Velasco, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), the three PNP sources said.

Velasco, one of the sources said, would be "dumped" into the Philippine Center for Transnational Crime as its head. This would keep him out of the race for the top PNP post.

One cell no. for 'switchers' proposed

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission (NTC) has been urged to draw up new regulations that would allow cellular phone subscribers to keep their mobile phone numbers even when they switch to other mobile carrier companies.

Rep. Joseph Santiago (Catanduanes), a former NTC chief, made the proposal shortly after the United States adopted new federal regulations allowing mobile phone users to retain their phone numbers even if they switched carriers.

"We would not have to change mobile cellphone numbers every time we switch to Smart, Globe, Talk n' Text or Sun Cellular," Santiago said.

Apart from the US, at least a dozen other countries now allow subscribers to retain their old number when they switch carriers.

"Mobile phone number portability cannot be avoided by both regulators and operators. It is bound to happen soon. We might as well prepare for it now," Santiago said yesterday.

He added that this kind of "portability" could serve as a catalyst for a fresh surge of capital spending by mobile phone service providers.

Santiago said consumers would be the biggest beneficiaries of portability, because "in order to discourage switching, operators would be forced to improve and add more value to their services." *Alcuin Papa*

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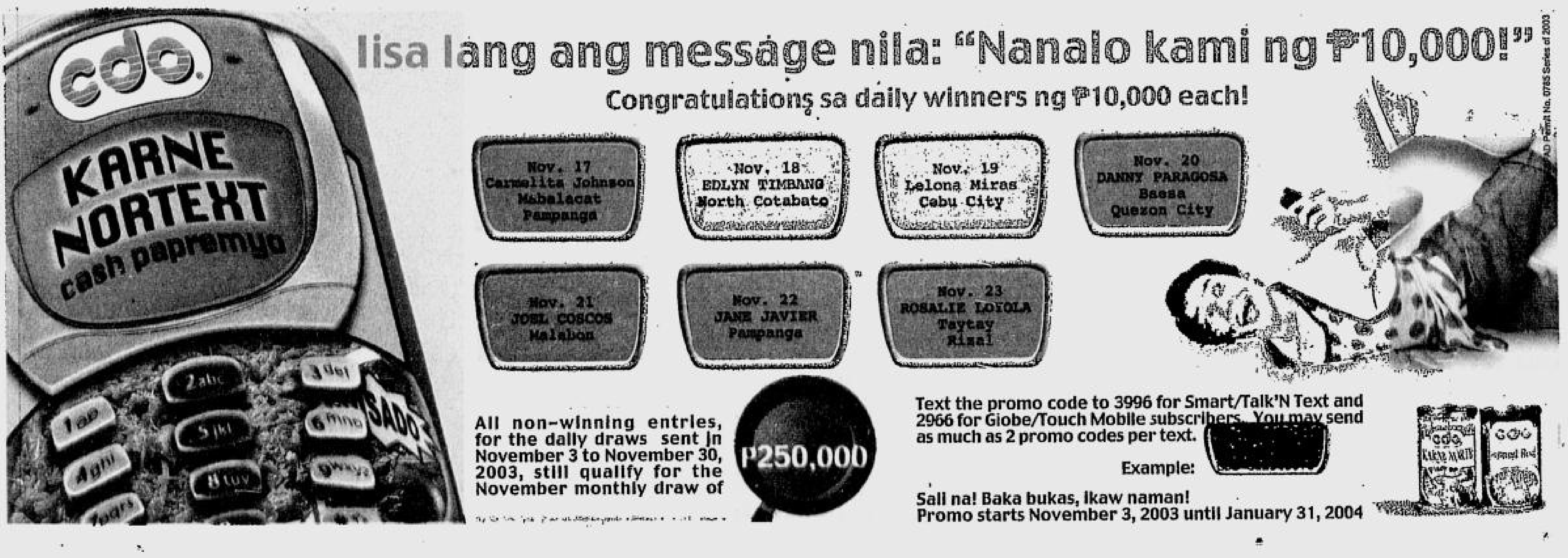

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MILF still training terrorists—Ermita

By Christian Esguerra

THE RESUMPTION of the stalled peace talks between the government and the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front appears to be in peril after Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita accused the MILF of still harboring operatives of the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiyah in Mindanao.

In an interview after the Bonifacio Day rites at Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Makati City, Ermita noted that one condition for the resumption of peace negotiations was for the MILF to denounce terrorist groups such as the JI and other criminal organizations.

Ermita noted that while top MILF leaders appeared to be adhering to this condition, MILF commanders on the ground were not.

According to Ermita, an undetermined number of JI recruits continue to receive training, particularly in bomb-making, inside MILF territories on Mt. Cararao in Lanao del Norte and Mt. Vietnam in Lanao del Sur.

Ermita, a member of the government negotiating panel before he assumed the defense portfolio, said that each batch of trainees consisted of at least 12 men, mostly Indonesians. There were also MILF recruits participating in training exercises, he added.

Agreement

"I don't want to accuse the MILF leadership of acting in bad faith because we have an agreement," Ermita told reporters.

"(But) if we prove that they are giving active assistance (to the JI), then this could adversely affect our talks."

To keep the talks going, Ermita appealed to the MILF leadership not to allow their field commanders to provide sanctuary or any form of assistance to the Southeast Asia-based terrorist organization.

A team from Malaysia is scheduled to arrive in Manila this month to monitor the conduct of the ceasefire in Mindanao. The visit is expected to jump-start the talks which were delayed by the recent Organization of the Islamic Countries conference and the retirement of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Muhammad last month.

The government also considers the JI trainings in Mindanao a top security issue.

"It would [take] only one or two or three small groups (of trainees) to slip out and create mayhem," Ermita said.

Aside from the JI trainees in Mindanao, at least 31 known JI operatives are being hunted by the military and the Philippine National Police, he said.

Al-Qaida

Citing intelligence information, Ermita said JI activities in the Philippines were being funded with as much as $50,000 (roughly P2.5 million) in cash that was slipped into the country by a finance officer of the al-Qaida terrorist network of Osama bin Laden a few months ago.

Though the activities of the JI for the most part have been "confined" to Mindanao, Ermita did not discount the possibility the group could move to urban centers, especially during the holidays.

"The public should be really alert at all times," he said.

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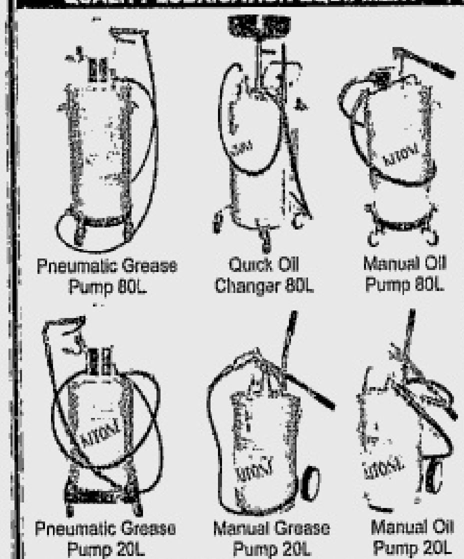

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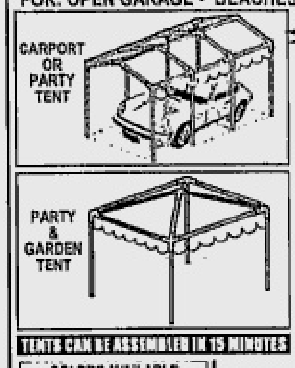

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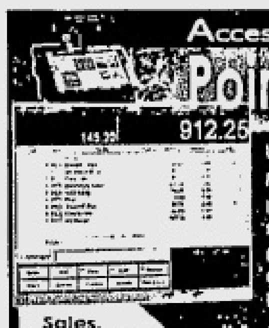

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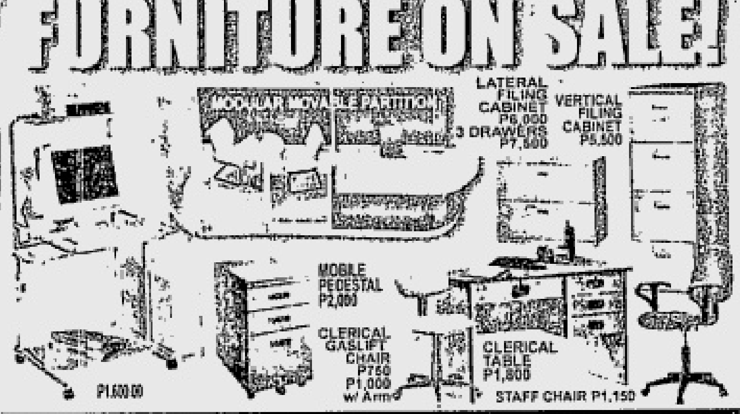
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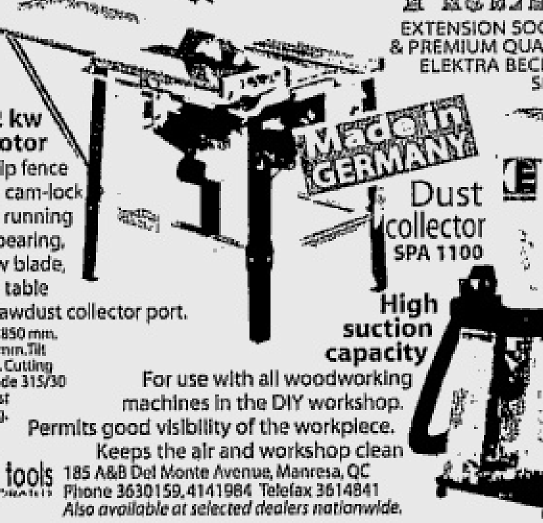

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DENR seizes, frees rare flying foxes, turtles

By N. Bordadora

FIELD officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources confiscated 15 flying foxes and 42 Asian box turtles from a market vendor in Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya in the DENR's ongoing campaign against the illegal wildlife trade.

Operatives of the DENR regional office in Cagayan Valley seized the endangered species from the vendor, whose name was withheld after she agreed to help environment officials track the source of the animals and their dealers.

Environment Secretary Elisea G. Gozun earlier ordered field operatives of the DENR to intensify the drive to protect and conserve the country's wildlife and their habitats.

DENR Regional Executive Director Antonio G. Principe said that of the 15 flying foxes, seven were released in the forests of Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, while the remaining eight died. Five of the dead animals were preserved while the other three were buried since they were in an advanced state of decomposition.

On the other hand, all the seized turtles were released in Carague Lake in Enrile, Cagayan.

Principe said the vendor borrowed P5,000 from a loan shark to be able to engage in the wildlife trade.

"She begged for the return of the confiscated wildlife species be returned to her because she was not aware that this was prohibited. She doesn't know how she could pay back her loan," Principe said.

Her request was not granted but she was instead informed that she could be penalized.

CA upholds BIR exec's suspension

THE COURT of Appeals has upheld the six-month suspension of a Bureau of Internal Revenue official accused of falsifying his credentials.

In a 16-page decision, the CA 11th Division upheld the decision of Deputy Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio Jr. to suspend BIR official Aguinaldo L. Miravalles.

Miravalles was accused in March of making it appear that he had passed the career service examination when Civil Service Commission records showed he had not.

"We find, after due consideration, that the preventive suspension was imposed after the Ombudsman considered documentary evidence indicating that the petitioner has represented that he possesses civil service eligibility when the Civil Service Commission certifies that he has none," the CA said.

Miravalles had petitioned the CA to overturn his suspension, saying Gervacio had acted with grave abuse of discretion and denied him his right to due process.

Philip C. Tubeza

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Lakas exec questions FPJ citizenship

From page A1

Senate President Franklin Drilon, the new chair of the Liberal Party, replied tersely when asked whether he thought Poe was serious about his bid. "I think his handlers are," he said.

Pangilinan, also a member of the Liberal Party, said that if Poe had been really stricken ill, then he wished him a "speedy recovery."

"But if he wasn't, that would be most unfortunate because we cannot have a presidency by proxy," he said.

But Sotto, in a news briefing on Thursday before Poe failed to show up at the biggest annual gathering of the country's businessmen, said Poe was dead serious about his candidacy.

"In a very short while, FPJ will be presenting his economic team and I will not be surprised if members, in fact leaders from the PCCI, in the very near future will be supporting and helping in formulating an economic recovery program that will be feasible and doable for our country," Sotto said.

It was Sotto who read Poe's five-page statement at the conference of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In his radio interview, Alvarez also took potshots at the statement that Sotto had read.

"Drawing up a platform of government is not as simple as putting ideas on paper and reading them to the public. You should study all details and be ready to defend them," Alvarez said.

He said Poe's compassionate nature, which Sotto said was his main asset as a presidential candidate, would not be enough to lead the country.

Poe's simple plan of running the government through broad consultation with Filipinos and other foreign governments would lead to questions of who was leading the country and who was accountable for the government's actions, Alvarez said.

Lacson's ratings

The camp of one presidential contender who did show up at the business conference waxed confident that their man's approval ratings would improve.

San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora, campaign manager for opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, said yesterday that people would find Lacson's "doable" program of government impressive.

In a statement, Zamora noted that many people had not yet made up their minds on whom to vote for in the May elections.

The same statement also highlighted what Felipe Miranda of Pulse Asia had to say about Lacson's approval ratings in the coming months.

In an interview with the ANC station on Saturday, Miranda said Lacson's ratings could still double in the coming months from the 12-percent rating he got in the last survey.

"He can more than double his electoral preference," Zamora quoted Miranda as saying. "Even in Metro Manila, I can say, he can go as high as 25-30 percent."

"But if the LDP were to select him as their candidate and if the opposition were to cluster around him, you cannot (take) him out as a possible tenant of Malacañang, too," Miranda said.

The LDP president, Sen. Edgardo Angara, said the united opposition would have a standard-bearer, his running mate, as well as a senatorial slate in 10 days.

Angara, the leading supporter of Poe, said the announcement would come after the LDP coalesced with four other parties—the Nationalist People's Coalition, Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino, PDP-Laban and Reporma.

He said the choice was now between Poe and Lacson, adding both men would keep their word that they would respect the coalition's decision.

Malonzo's stance

Another movie actor who used to be outspoken about his support for President Macapagal-Arroyo's bid in 2004 has decided to keep mum.

Asked about Poe's candidacy, Caloocan City Mayor Rey Malonzo said, "I won't comment on it yet."

Malonzo has been a staunch ally of Ms Macapagal. In several interviews, the mayor had consistently expressed his support for her.

When Ms Macapagal decided to break her earlier promise not to run in 2004, Malonzo said she was entitled to change her mind especially since the country needed her.

During the height of destabilization attempts against Ms Macapagal after the July 27 Oakwood mutiny, Malonzo was one of the first local officials to announce their support for the President.

"We in show business will just keep quiet," Malonzo said in a phone interview, speaking in Filipino. *Baka magkatampuhan pa* (We don't want bad blood between us)." ***With a report from Edson Tandoc Jr.***

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 1, 2003
1st Week of Advent

1st Reading:	Is 2:1-5
Gospel:	Mt 8:5-11

When Jesus entered Capernaum, an army captain approached him to ask his help, "Sir, my servant lies sick at home. He is paralyzed and suffers terribly." Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

The captain answered, "I am not worthy to have you under my roof. Just give an order and my boy will be healed. For I myself, a junior officer, give orders to my soldiers. And if I say to one: 'Go,' he goes, and if I say to another: 'Come,' he comes, and to my servant: 'Do this,' he does it."

When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those who were following him, "I tell you, I have not found such faith in Israel. I say to you, many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of heaven."

Commentary

The faith of the centurion enables Jesus to heal his servant. Faith in Jesus is the basis to foster a new relationship in the building up of the Kingdom of God. In Jesus, everybody is equal in dignity. There is no master or slave, neither Jew nor gentile. Everybody is invited to participate in the great banquet of the Kingdom.

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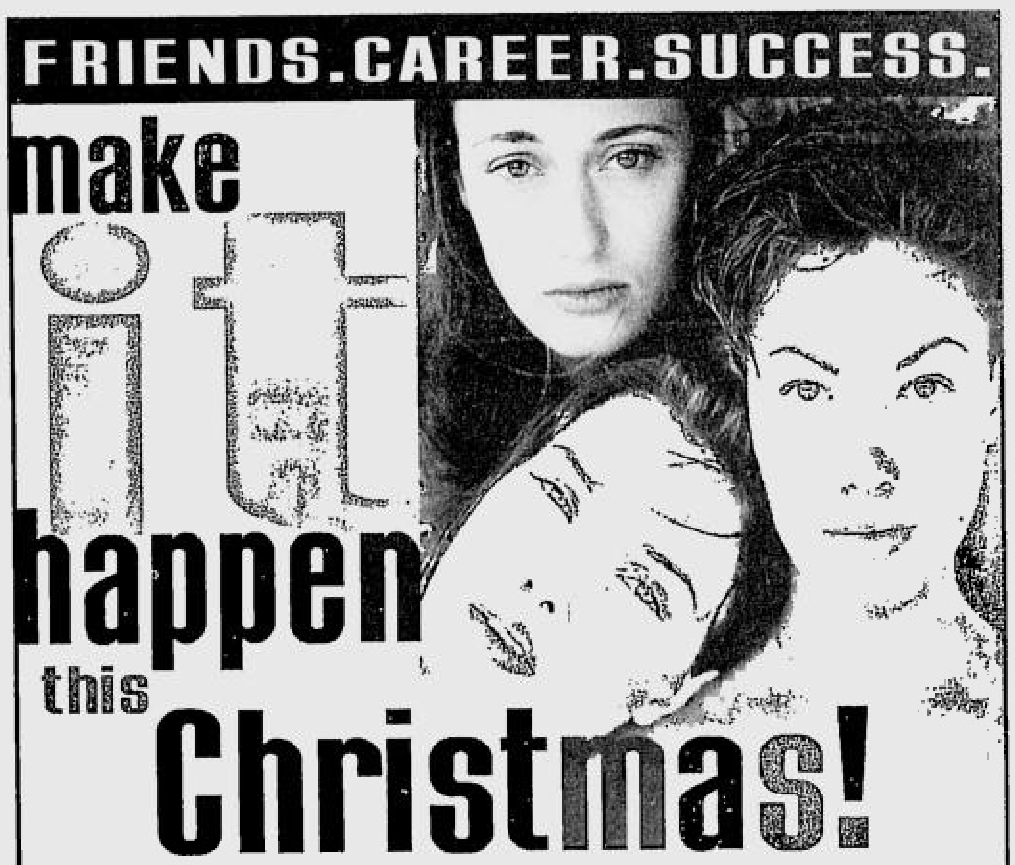

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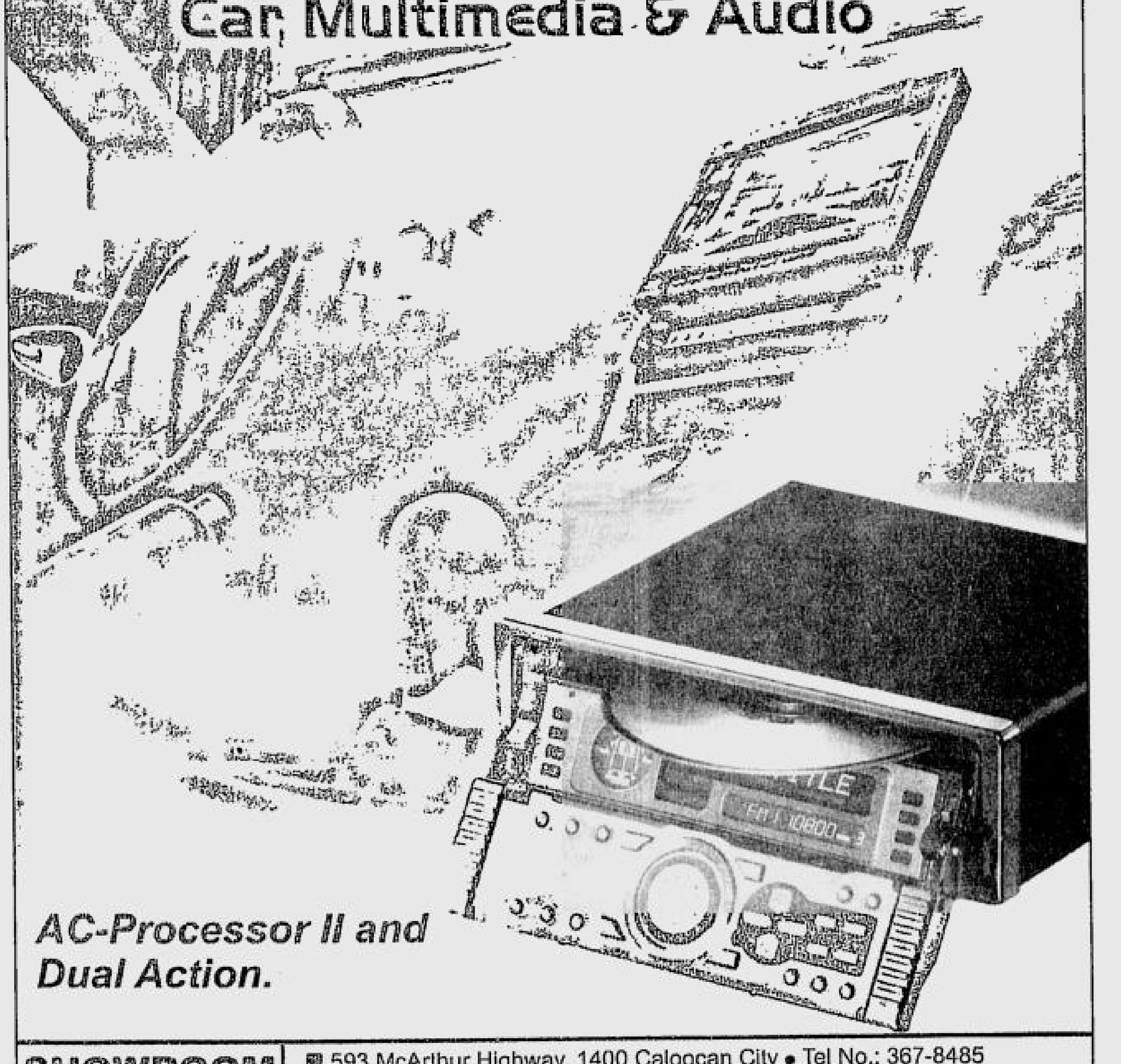

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7 spies, 2 diplomats, 2 GIs killed

From page A1

November, with 79 American soldiers slain along with 25 other allied soldiers. It has been the bloodiest month of the war that began March 20.

A military statement said the two US soldiers were killed when a task force from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment was hit Saturday by rocket-propelled grenades and automatic fire east of the border town of Husaybah, 300 km northwest of Baghdad.

In Mahmudiyah, 29 km south of Baghdad, assailants ambushed on Saturday a team of Spanish military intelligence officers, killing seven of them. One Spaniard escaped the assault.

Television footage of the aftermath of the ambush showed several bodies along a highway as cars, their headlights on, drove by at dusk. People milled around, and a youth—apparently aware he was being filmed—kicked his foot in the air over a body. An older youth rested his foot on a corpse, an arm raised in triumph.

"We sacrifice our souls and blood for you, oh Saddam," some in the group chanted in Arabic, witnesses said.

On Sunday, witnesses at the scene, about 50 km south of Baghdad, said the Spaniards had been traveling in a pair of sport utility vehicles when men in a car behind them opened fire. One of the SUVs careened off the road into a ditch.

The occupants fled the car and were shot at the roadside, perhaps by a second group of attackers involved in the ambush. On Sunday, the burnt-out remains of the car could be seen in a watery ditch at the side of the road, with a group of villagers scavenging its parts.

Witnesses said the four men in the second car were also killed at the side of the road nearby, apparently by a grenade that was thrown or fired at their vehicle. Blood could be seen on bushes nearby, and a broken pair of glasses lay on the road.

"All of them are Jews," said 15-year-old Tareq Jassim, a local villager who was at the scene on Sunday. "All of them are occupiers."

Japanese diplomats

The two Japanese diplomats were killed by unidentified gunmen on Saturday as they stopped to buy food and drinks at a stand outside the village of Mukayshifa on the road between Baghdad and Tikrit, Lt. Col. William MacDonald, said Sunday.

The diplomats, who were on their way to attend a reconstruction conference, were not traveling with a military escort, MacDonald said.

The attacks on America's allies appear to be part of an effort to undercut the cohesion of the US-led coalition. Insurgents also have targeted Iraqis seen as collaborating with the occupation authorities, such as police officers and local officials.

The latest killings came more than two weeks after 19 Italians were killed in a car bomb attack in Nasiriyah.

In Tokyo, Japan's Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said there would be no change in Japan's plans to dispatch troops to support the US-led reconstruction of Iraq. The deaths were the first involving the Japanese in Iraq since the US-led invasion.

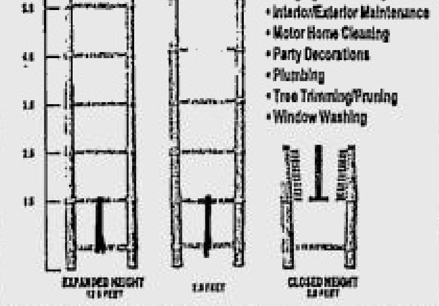
Spokespersons for Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar also affirmed that the attack wouldn't cause Spain to end its presence in Iraq.

US President George W. Bush called Aznar "to express his sympathies on behalf of the American people," said White House spokesperson Allen Abney. Spain's King Juan Carlos professed his profound sorrow over the deaths.

Spain, one of the firmest supporters of the US-led invasion to oust Saddam Hussein, has sent 1,300 soldiers to help maintain order. In previous attacks, a Spanish diplomat attached to Spain's intelligence agency was assassinated near his residence in Baghdad on Oct. 9, and a Spanish Navy captain was killed in the truck bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on Aug. 19.

Despite the spate of killings in November, the top US commander in Iraq said the overall number of guerrilla attacks on coalition forces was falling off. *AP*

AN IRAQI youth stands on a burned car south of Baghdad a day after a deadly attack on Spanish troops. REUTERS



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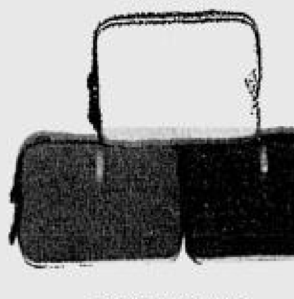

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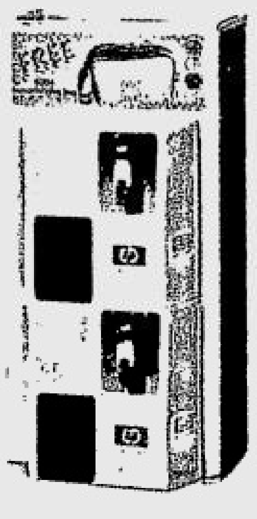

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3359, Series of 2003.

Poe bid likely to self-destruct

From page A1

enced Poe jumped the gun on it. His premature decision indicated his go-it-alone and one-man-band political instincts, exposing the fatal disarray of the opposition and its glaring lack of discipline, even before it could mount a serious campaign for 2004.

Poe's announcement resulted in offending Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a determined aspirant for the presidency, and in making him stonewall on his presidential intentions. Lacson believes that the road show process, initiated by LDP leader Sen. Edgardo Angara, was pushing him out of the selection process to make way for Poe.

More fragmented

Angara and Lacson are deeply antagonistic to each other, and Poe's announcement makes harder the task of searching for a single candidate for the opposition plagued by divisiveness. Poe's move has deepened the cleavage.

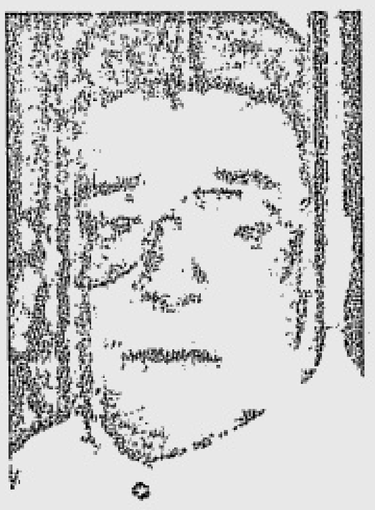
Now, the opposition faces a conundrum. Lacson insists he is not backing off to make way for Poe, in what his supporters denounce as the "dictatorial" selection method, and Poe cannot withdraw without losing face.

If the opposition was fractured at the start of the road show, it is now even more disunited after Poe's announcement, which appeared to create a fait accompli that would allow the actor to lock the opposition nomination, and that was calculated to give him a head-start to gain momentum.

Now, the opposition is even more fragmented. The LDP machine, which should give Poe the political vehicle to run a campaign with a semblance of an organization, is already limping as the opposition prepares to launch its ticket of presidential, vice presidential and senatorial candidates.

Poe's worst nemesis is his own impetuousness and his political exemplar and movieland buddy, former President Joseph Estrada. Comparison between Estrada and Poe does not yield evidence that Poe could repeat the Estrada act, much less his smashing victory in the 1998 elections.

Poe suffers in comparison to Estrada. Unlike Poe, who does not seem to have an idea of the importance of organization and party, Estrada has the political instinct about the critical role of parties, although Estrada had been immensely popular months ahead of the decision, while Poe is pathetically struggling to gain momentum in the public opinion polls. Estrada realized that popularity alone could not make him sweep the election, although in 1998, he faced relatively weaker opponents.


POE: Maladroit and mishap-ridden candidacy?

Estrada had a minuscule party and he had to ride on Angara's LDP, which was strong in 1998. On the other hand, Poe faces a stronger field, which, according to the Pulse Asia survey in November, has at least three main contenders—President Macapagal Arroyo, former Education Secretary Raul Roco and Poe himself—with no one romping far ahead of the pack.

Pro-poor rhetoric

If the opposition, however, can overcome its fractiousness and present a single presidential candidate (a remote possibility at this late stage), that candidate will be mounted on a crippled carriage.

Poe claims the same constituency as Estrada's (the poor and the socioeconomic classes), but Poe has not identified with them, and his rhetoric has no pro-poor substance.

Thus, his claim on the poor constituency is based on flimsy ground.

The recent opinion survey shows that both President Macapagal and Roco are cutting inroads in the lower classes, and it does not show that Poe has a natural constituency of his own, except moviegoers, many of whom have been disenchanted by Estrada's failure to help the poor during his presidency, except inciting them in a class war against the elite.

Comparison with Estrada is a political liability for Poe and if his handlers claim he is seeking the presidency without a "baggage" or no political debts to pay. But Poe has a heavy baggage that freights him down—the memory of the failure of Estrada to deliver benefits to the poor despite his sloganeering of "Erap para sa mahihirap."

Who gains?

The self-destruction of the Poe campaign is based on his organizational weakness, highlighted by the disarray of the opposition. The disarray was dramatized over the weekend, when Sen. Rodolfo Biazon took a leave from the LDP in protest against the narrowing of the opposition choices to either Poe or Lacson, both of whom he considered extensions of Estrada. Biazon has joined the coalition of small parties clustered as a third force around Roco.

The beneficiaries of the gridlock between Poe and Lacson in the oppostion are either Ms Macapagal or Roco, or both. Either will like nothing better than to promote the gridlock which can only split the opposition votes.

But more ominous for Poe is the fact that the business community, learning lessons from the inept and disastrous Estrada presidency, is more aggressive and outspoken in manifesting its veto power or disapproval of Poe's candidacy.

The peso continued to weaken over the weekend, three days after Poe's announcement that shocked the currency and securities markets more dramatically than the resignation of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho the previous week.

The peso plummeted to a record closing low of P55.73 to the US dollar on Friday from P55.69 the previous day, exhibiting deeper-seated anxieties fueled by uncertainties over Poe's competence in managing the company and providing coherent leadership.

While the markets have shown volatility over a series of politically unsettling events over the past six months, they have never been more blunt in sending a message of disapproval or concern than in their reaction to the Poe announcement. While there was disquiet about uncertainties over Estrada's candidacy in 1998, the markets were not rattled in assessing his incoming presidency. In the case of Poe, the markets showed more profound nervousness.

The markets' powerful shock reaction shot down Poe's presidential bid even before it could take off from a battered launching pad—the opposition's party vehicle.

As Poe faces further critical tests of his policies in the coming days, pressures are building up that could hasten the early implosion of his maladroit and mishap-ridden candidacy.

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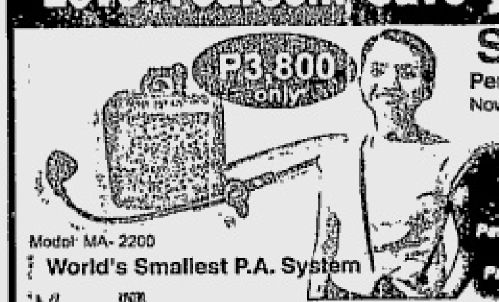
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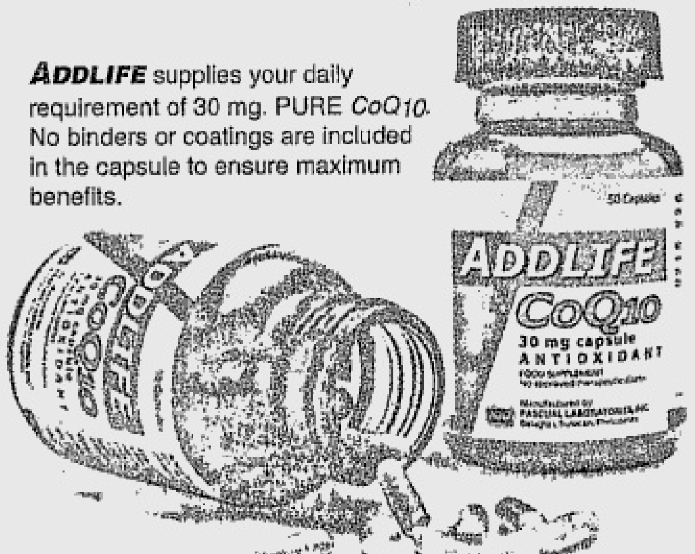

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Oil cartel, Russia on verge of cold war

VIENNA—With Russia now exporting more oil than Saudi Arabia, the scene is set for a cold war between Moscow and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec), industry experts say.

The Russians are refusing to go along with Opec demands for a concerted drop in production, posing looming problems for the cartel as Opec oil ministers prepare to meet here on Thursday.

Russia does not belong to the organization but has become a prime mover on world petroleum markets, and there is not much Opec can do about it.

"The sharp rise in Russian oil exports this year—which will continue next year—once again raises the question: 'Is Opec doomed?'" said Leo Drollas of the Center for Global Energy Studies in London.

Russia is pumping some 8.6 million barrels of oil a day, compared to 7.96 million for Saudi Arabia.

This, Drollas said, was "changing the power structure of the industry."

Opec wants all oil-producing countries, whether or not they are members of the cartel, to reduce output in order to make way for exports by Iraq, which is expected to be producing 3.5 million barrels a day within five years.

Without a reduction in the offer, the addition of Iraqi exports will create a glut on the market, making it difficult for Opec to maintain the $25 (21 euros) per barrel, which it sees as the "fair price" for long-term market stability.

But the fact that benchmark Brent crude oil stands around $29 a barrel because of what Opec calls temporary speculative pressures, gives Russia no incentive to curb its output. In fact, it is likely to increase production to 9.2 million barrels a day next year, according to Francis Perrin of the magazine Petrole et Gaz in Paris.

"Russia has no interest in collaborating with Opec," Drollas said. "It's better off fighting another cold war with it."

"It's the so called 'free-rider syndrome,'" he added. "While Russia refuses to cut production, Opec has to do it if it wants to sustain prices, so Russia gets a free ride on production levels and high prices without giving anything back to Opec."

Frederic Lasserre, an oil industry analyst with Societe Generale, said Opec is caught in a vicious circle. *AFP*

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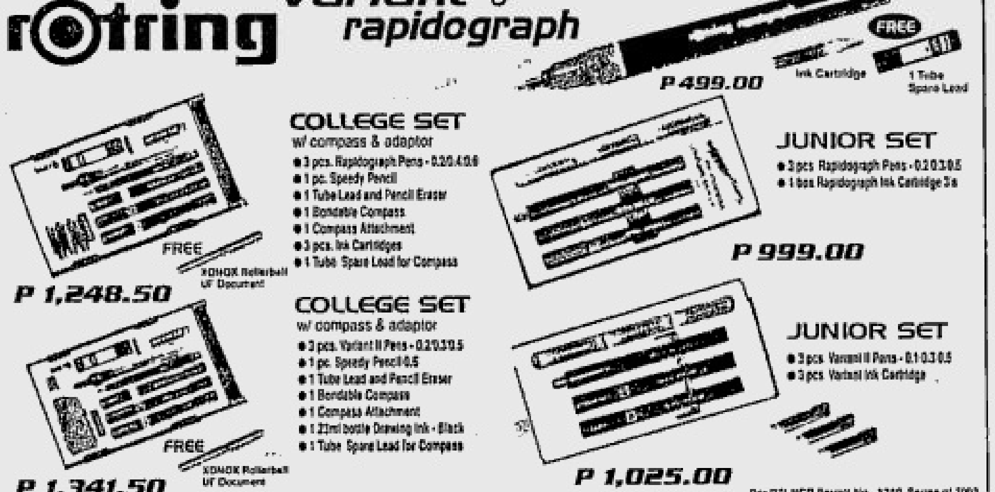

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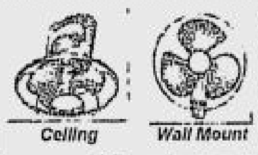

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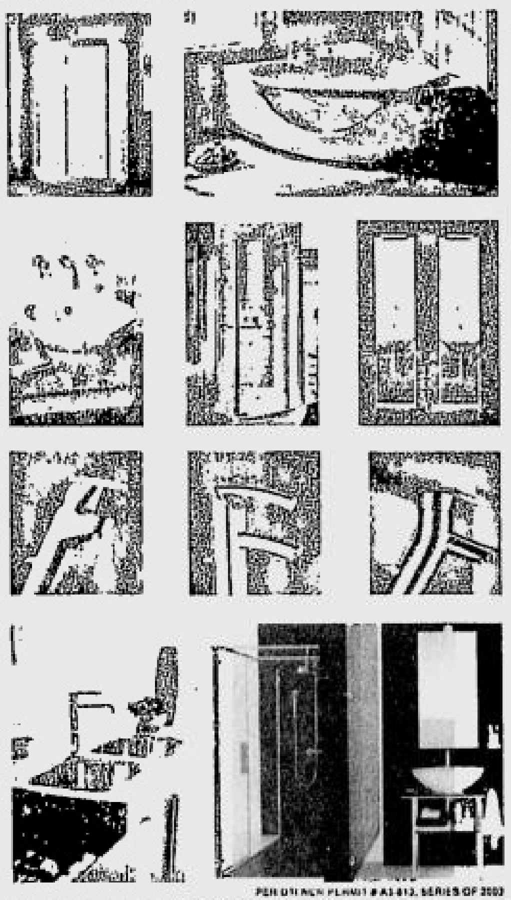

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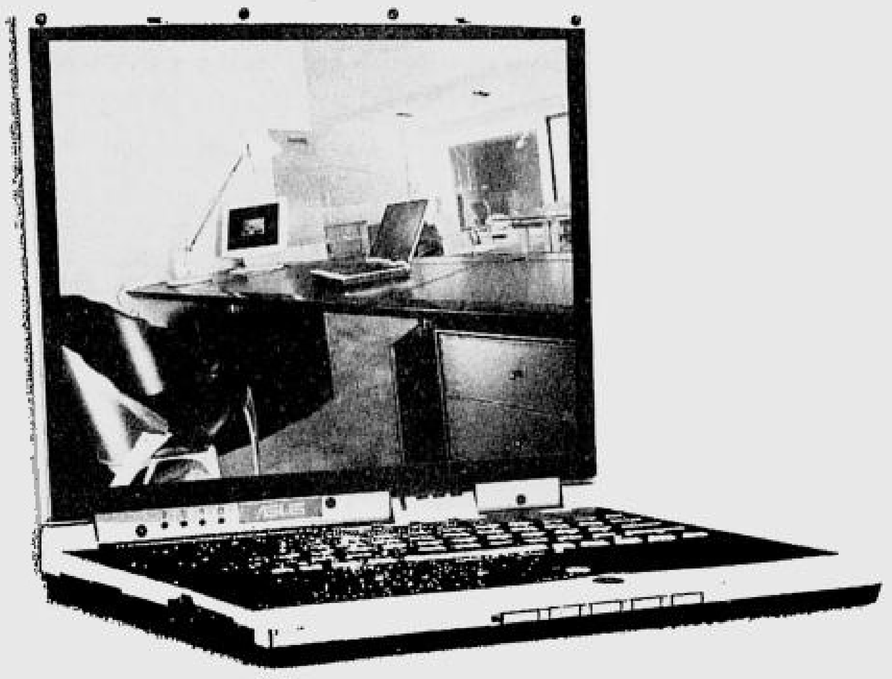

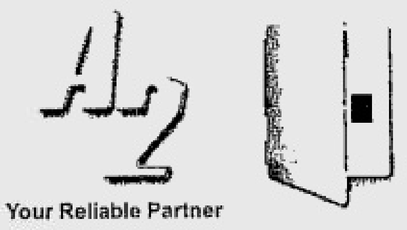
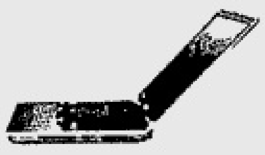
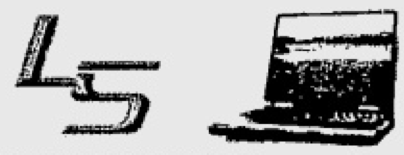

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Catholics seek exemption from US contraceptive law

SAN FRANCISCO—If you don't believe in the law, do you have to follow it?

That's the question before courts in New York and California, which are being asked to exempt branches of the Catholic Church from state laws requiring contraceptives be included in employee prescription drug plans. Under church doctrine, contraception is a sin.

"The Catholic Church explicitly teaches that artificial contraception is morally unacceptable and, if knowingly and freely engaged in, sinful," Catholic Charities of Sacramento attorney James Sweeney said.

After California's law was enacted in 2000, the group unsuccessfully sought a court ruling to bar the law from being enforced on the church's charity outreach programs. A state appeals court also denied the church relief. Now the California Supreme Court is set to hear the case Dec. 2.

Versions of the law have been adopted in 20 states after lawmakers concluded private employee prescription plans without contraceptive benefits discriminated against women. Lawyers closely following the debate said the only other legal challenge is in the lower courts of New York, before a judge of the Supreme Court of Albany County.

California's case is years ahead of the New York litigation, and civil rights groups, health care companies and Catholic organizations have filed extensive position papers with the court.

"It certainly could be very persuasive on other courts," said Rebekah Diller, a director of the civil rights group New York Civil Liberties Union, who is following the litigation.

At issue is a collision of the right of a religion to practice what it preaches and the newly acquired rights of thousands of women employed by church-affiliated groups to be insured for contraceptives.

Catholic Charities directly employs more than 1,000 workers in California and New York, but a ruling favoring the charity could also prevent more than 100,000 employees at 77 church-affiliated hospitals in California and New York from benefiting from the laws.

State regulators point to US Supreme Court rulings in favor of a ban on polygamy, despite objections from Mormons, and against Native Americans who were denied unemployment insurance after being fired for using peyote during religious ceremonies. *AP*

Hot gifts for those who have everything

LOS ANGELES—Discriminating and truly well-heeled shoppers this season are bypassing sales at the mall and checking out high-end holiday gift guides for homes, yachts and even celebrity car castoffs.

The holiday issue of the duPont Registry, a showcase for discriminating buyers, offers a warehouse of vehicles owned or previously owned by celebrities, including country singer Alan Jackson's 1966 Excalibur roadster at only $45,995, and a Mercedes-Benz CL500 formerly owned by Indianapolis Colts receiver Marvin Harrison priced at $69,850.

Conspicuous consumption connoisseurs who prefer "new" to "used" can consider the 612-horsepower Porsche Carerra GT package offered for $490,000 in the annual gift guide from the luxury lifestyle magazine Robb Report.

The package includes the car, driving instructions by champion driver Hutley Haywood at California's Infineon Raceway, special Porsche luggage and lodging at Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa.

For really opulent gift-giving, the Robb Report suggests:

- The 45-meter yacht Magnifica III. $22.7 million.
- The oceanside Cima del Mundo estate in Montecito, near Santa Barbara, built in 1924. $40 million.
- 1,350-square-meter home in Florida's exclusive Spruce Creek, the nation's first fly-in community, plus two adjoining hangars and six aircraft. $45.7 million.

Other holiday ideas in the Robb Report's 20th annual Ultimate Gift Guide:

- 6.6-meter Deep Flight Aviator submarine. $1.7 million.
- An 18th century violin crafted by Antonio Stradivari. Just under $4 million.
- A diamond jewelry collection—all 452 carats' worth. $15 million. *AP*

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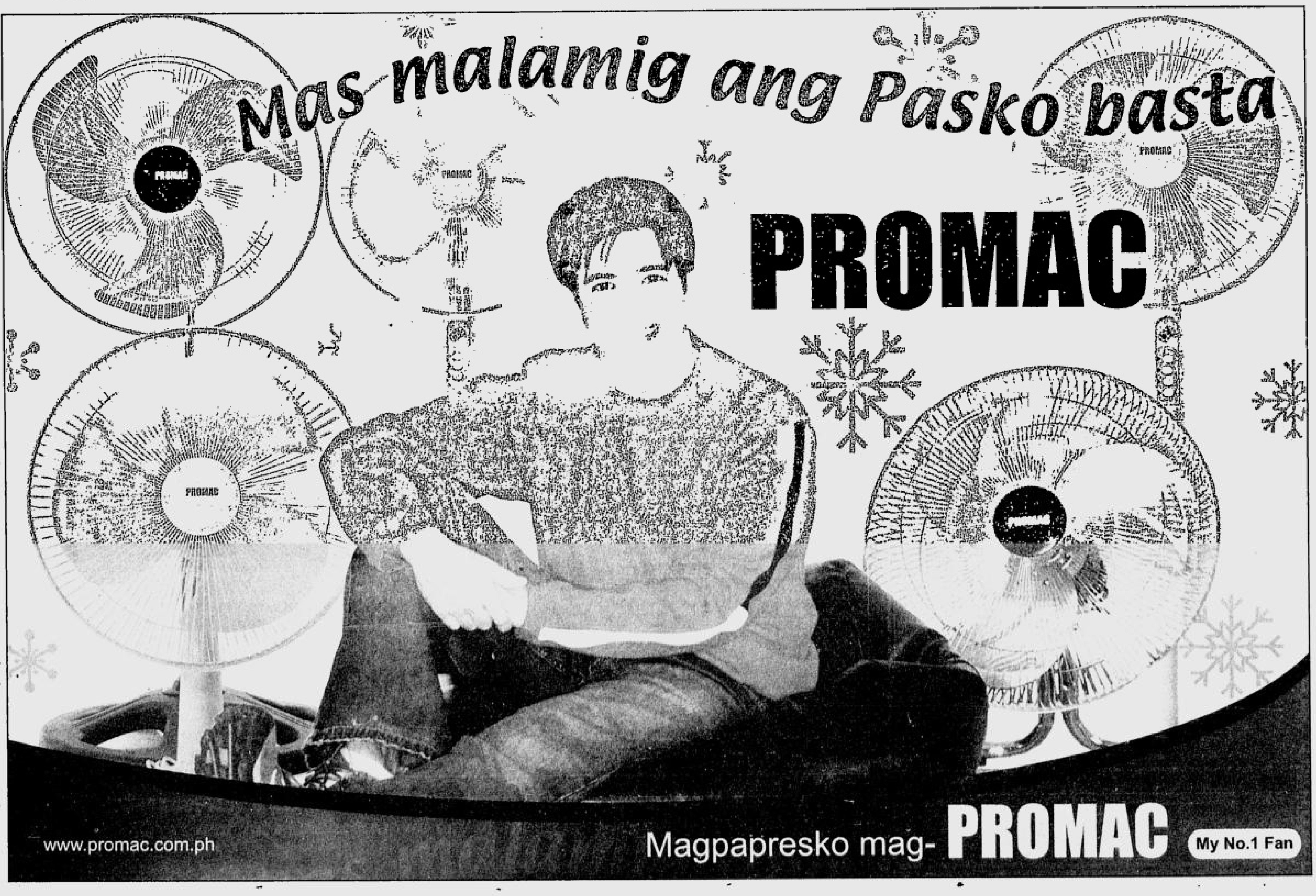

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Army chief hits 'Sharon Plan'

JERUSALEM—Israel's Army chief has privately voiced reservations about Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's proposal to take unilateral steps if peacemaking with the Palestinians fails, Haaretz newspaper reported on Sunday.

Lt. Gen. Moshe Yaalon's reported comments in the liberal Israeli daily added to criticism that he and four former Israeli security chiefs leveled recently against Sharon's tough policies toward the Palestinians.

Asked about the report, an army spokesperson said the military does not comment on accounts of purported private remarks.

Sharon raised the possibility in public remarks on Thursday that he would take unilateral moves, including the dismantling of isolated Jewish settlements, should efforts to promote a US-backed peace "road map" collapse.

Haaretz said that under the "Sharon Plan," Israel would then unilaterally draw a border for a Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and in less than half of the West Bank, a homeland far smaller than Palestinians envisage.

Yaalon, the newspaper said, believes unilateral removal of settlements would confer "support to terror" in the face of a three-year-old Palestinian uprising and should be done only as part of a comprehensive peace arrangement.

Haaretz said Yaalon believes the Army should first pull out of "quiet cities" in the West Bank as a way of rewarding the Palestinians and pave the way for a future peace deal.

Yaalon, challenging government policy, said recently in newspaper interviews that tough travel restrictions on Palestinians only boosted support for militants.

Yaalon's reported remarks added to growing calls at home and abroad for Sharon to end violence and bolster the status of Palestinian moderates against militants by reining in settlers and lifting blockades imposed on Palestinian cities.

Israel has also come under international criticism for its construction of a barrier looping deep into the West Bank, a "security fence" it says is aimed at keeping suicide bombers out of its cities. Palestinians call the barrier a land grab.

Reuters

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22 die in Congo plane crash

KINSHASA—An Antonov-26 plane crashed in northwestern Congo shortly after take-off on Saturday, killing all 22 Congolese passengers and the crew, officials said. It was not known how many crew members were on the plane when it crashed near the town of Boende, more than 600 km northeast of the capital Kinshasa, Information Minister Vital Kamerhe told Reuters. The cause of the crash was unknown. "The passengers were Congolese. The crew included Congolese, but as this was an Antonov the pilots may well have been Russian. But I need to check," said Kamerhe. *Reuters*

Blast in Georgia

TBILISI—Georgia's defense minister pledged Saturday that the army was supportive of the country's new leadership as tensions grew after a bomb attack targeted a party that is a rival to the successors of ousted President Eduard Shevardnadze. "The army is an instrument of foreign, not domestic policy," said Defense Minister David Tevzadze following rumors that the armed forces were opposed to Shevardnadze's resignation after a popular revolt. The blast outside the headquarters of the Labor Party early Saturday morning did not cause any injuries, a top party official said. *AFP*

Mandela's AIDS concert

CAPE TOWN—Bono, The Corrs, Beyonce Knowles and other international stars answered Nelson Mandela's call to help fight the scourge of AIDS on Saturday, putting on a musical extravaganza broadcast across the world on the Internet. Mandela, 85, one of the world's leading AIDS campaigners, joined 40,000 fans of all races who packed into a stadium in South Africa's tourist mecca Cape Town under a cloudless sky for the fund-raising concert. "(AIDS sufferers) are serving a prison term for life," Mandela, who spent 27 years in jail during South Africa's apartheid era, told the crowd. AIDS has hit South Africa harder than any other country, with more than five million of its 45 million people infected, and is seen corroding an already fragile social fabric as it leaves an army of orphans in its wake. Mandela, who was given a thunderous reception, has launched a campaign called 46664—his prison number—to mobilize governments to declare HIV/AIDS a global emergency and to get millions of infected people on life-prolonging anti-retrovirals. *Reuters*

Progress on EU charter

NAPLES, Italy—EU foreign ministers made more progress than some expected in tough weekend talks on a new constitution for the bloc, but the central battle on voting power among member states seemed no closer to solution. "As far as discussion on the institutions went, we chalked up advances that exceeded our expectations," said Franco Frattini, host of the talks as foreign minister of Italy, holder of the European Union's rotating presidency. The constitution, which must be ratified by all 15 member states and the 10 countries that join next May, will be a rule book for the enlarged EU, enabling it to function smoothly as it expands eastwards and its population swells to 450 million. *Reuters*

Turkey synagogue blast

ISTANBUL—Turkish police said on Saturday they had arrested a man who ordered and helped plan one of four suicide bombings that killed dozens of people in Istanbul earlier this month. The suspect was arrested with a false identification card while trying to pass across Turkey's border to Iran, Istanbul Deputy Police Chief Halil Yilmaz said in comments on television. The bombing of the Beth Israel synagogue and identical truck bomb attacks by Islamist militants on British and Jewish targets killed 61 people and injured hundreds. "He went to the Beth Israel synagogue area with the other attackers on the day of the explosion and gave the order for the attack," Yilmaz said. *Reuters*

N. Irish crisis talks

BELFAST—Efforts to salvage the Northern Ireland peace process began on Saturday after election gains for Protestant and Catholic hardliners threw the survival of the province's five-year-old peace pact into doubt. Britain's chief minister in the province, Paul Murphy, held talks with local politicians after a result that sharpened divisions between unionists from the Protestant majority, who favor continued British rule, and Catholic nationalists who want to join the south in a united Ireland. Firebrand preacher Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which emerged as the province's biggest party, is vowing to block the formation of a new power-sharing government until 1998 Good Friday agreement is abandoned and a new deal struck. Squaring up to the 77-year-old Paisley as the leading voice of Northern Ireland's Catholic minority is Sinn Fein, the political ally of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which flatly refuses to contemplate changes to the Good Friday accord. *Reuters*

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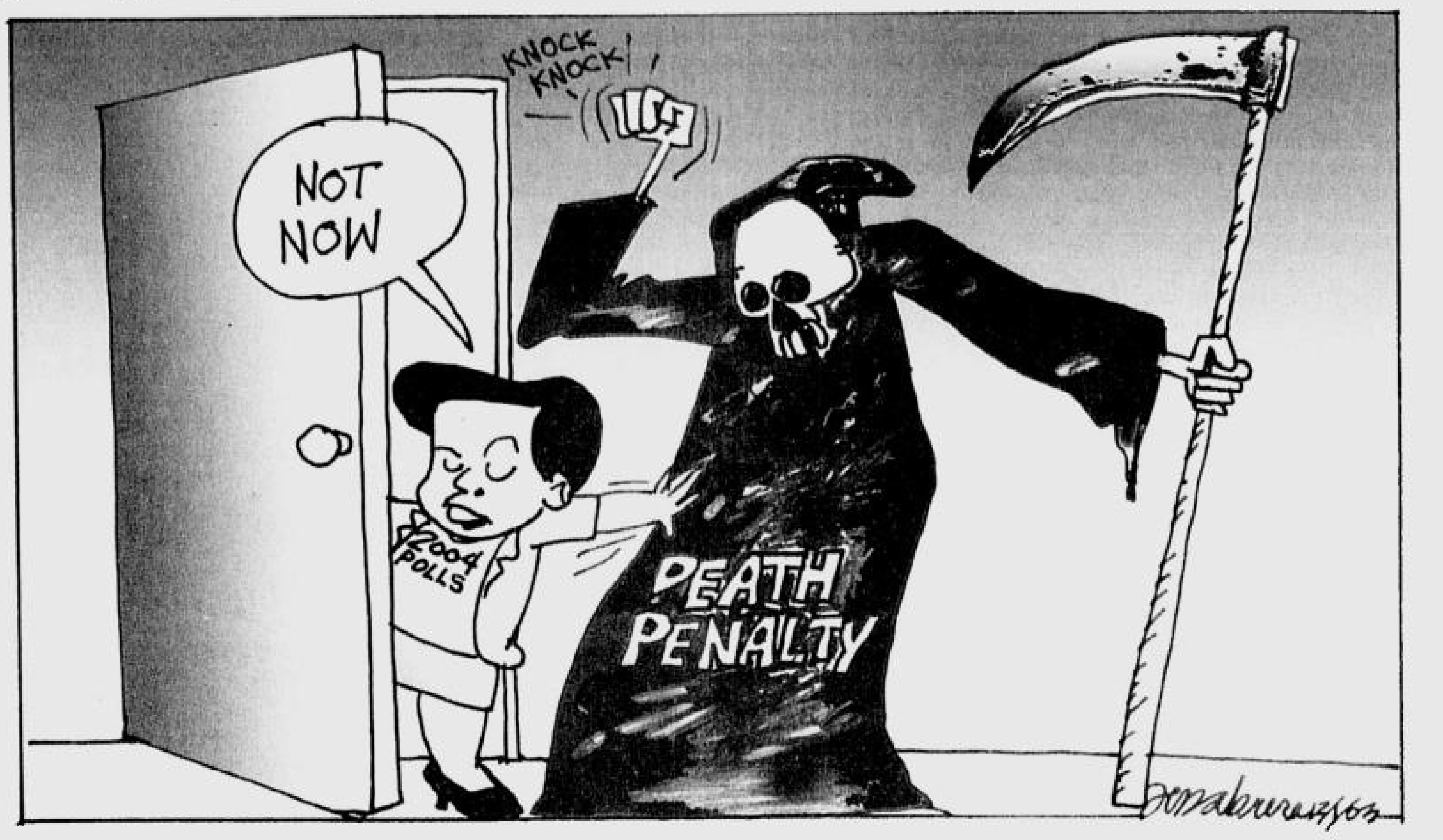

Margin of error

EDITORIAL

THE LATEST Pulse Asia survey of likely presidential candidates has heightened the country's triennial malady: election fever. The results of the poll, taken between Nov. 4 and 17, were announced the same week Fernando Poe Jr. became the third popular movie actor in the country's history to seek the presidency.

Many media organizations led off the survey story by mentioning either ex-senator Raul Roco's lead in three of the most likely election scenarios, or Poe's surprising strength in two of them. If his numbers hold, Poe may well follow in the footsteps of his fellow actor and close friend, deposed President Joseph Estrada, rather than those of matinee idol Rogelio de la Rosa, who withdrew from the presidential race in 1961.

It is instructive to note, however, that the Pulse Asia news release did not focus on the survey leaders. Instead, the polling firm zeroed in on the statistical truth: "survey data indicate a close fight among the contenders for the presidency."

"If the May 2004 presidential elections were a three-way fight involving President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (Poe and Roco)... it would be a tight race to the finish between the last two personalities." Roco would get 35 percent of the votes, while Poe would win 34 percent.

"Meanwhile, if these three personalities and Sen. Panfilo Lacson were contesting the presidency, it would be a three-cornered fight" between the President (28 percent), Poe (28), and Roco (30).

In the press statement issued by Malacañang, the emphasis was naturally on a different scenario tested by the survey: an eight-candidate race, where the President led the pack with 24 percent of the vote. (In the 1992 elections, in a field that was just as crowded, Fidel Ramos won the presidency with just about the same proportion of the vote.)

Do the contrasting reports—those of media, Pulse Asia, and the Palace—suggest that surveys are, in truth, a tissue of damned lies and statistics?

They can be; we must learn to distinguish between scientific polls, which depend on the laws of probability and the scientific method, and unscientific ones, such as call-in surveys.

"The major distinguishing difference between scientific and unscientific polls," write Sheldon R. Gawiser and G. Evans Witt in their classic "20 Questions" primer for the US National Council on Public Polls, "is who picks the respondents for the survey. In a scientific poll, the pollster identifies and seeks out the people to be interviewed. In an unscientific poll, the respondents usually 'volunteer' their opinions, selecting themselves for the poll." (The primer can be read at http://www.ncpp.org/qajsa.htm.)

Thus, the popular phone-in or text-in "poll" on TV's "Debate with Pare and Mare" is always entertaining, sometimes controversial—and, statistically, never useful.

A well-conducted scientific poll, on the other hand, can be most useful, accurately reflecting the opinion or preferences or sentiment of a national community. These surveys—here we include those of Pulse Asia and Social Weather Stations—play an important role in modern democracy; they cannot be a substitute for elections, but they must be welcomed even when they bear bad news, because the citizens of a representative democracy speak through them.

It is possible, however, that even when conducted according to the strictest standards, a scientific poll can get it wrong. This can happen in the case of a survey among voters, when the respondents fit the random sample criteria but are not likely to vote.

It is also possible that a survey can mimic the scientific language—probability samples, confidence levels, margins of error—to get it deliberately wrong. "An example of suspect polls are private polls conducted by a political campaign," write Gawiser and Witt. "The poll may have terrifically slanted questions or a strange sampling methodology, all with a tactical campaign purpose."

As the race to May 10 heats up, we can expect more surveys. Many will pretend to be what they are not. It is our collective responsibility, as a democratic people, to read each independently, and to separate the good from the fake.

Mayor Gordon tells why they oppose Subic seaport

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

LAST Nov. 27, this column dwelt on the quarrel over the development of the seaport in the former American base in Subic between former Rep. Felicito Payumo, chief of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) and the Gordons—Tourism Secretary Richard, Olongapo Mayor Kate and Congressman Gordon. Payumo, Rufo Colayco of the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) and the Gordons were invited to last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila to debate the pros and cons of the seaport but only Payumo and Colayco showed up. Mayor Gordon said they were not invited. Our secretary said she sent the invitations.

Anyway, I presented the reasons the Gordons were objecting to the construction of three additional berths for a container terminal at Cubi Point, and Payumo and Colayco refuted them one by one.

Mayor Gordon wasn't happy with that and faxed a letter explaining in detail why they are objecting to it. It is not a "family feud," the mayor said. It "is not about local politics and personalities. This is about saving our people from the burden of an unnecessary debt caused by the desire to build a facility in an environmentally sensitive area when there is a better alternative."

It is very difficult to explain to the Filipino people, Mayor Gordon wrote, "that while the private sector is willing to pay for the container terminal's construction, pay the government at least P140 million annually for its use, and build it in the Naval Supply Depot Compound, an area that even the World Bank says is most suitable, the SBMA is insisting on making the government pay P10 billion for the project, without any clear indication how it is going to pay for it and who is going to use it, and build it in an ecologically sensitive area.

"There is no need to borrow US$157 million and provide a counterpart fund of US$28 million to build this port because as early as 1996, several international port operators have expressed interest in developing the port at no cost to the government. The furtive attempts by the SBMA and BCDA to pass on this debt to the Filipino people is a blatant betrayal of our people.

"Let us not be fooled by motherhood statements like 'If we do not begin construction now, when? When we have already lost all cargo traffic to our neighbors?' While this sounds enticing, the figures tell a different story.

"The bidders in the 1996 port privatization project, namely Hutchinson International Terminals, International Container Terminal Services Inc., and Royal Port Services, among the largest and most reputable international port operators, projected that the NSD Compound, once fully developed, would be able to handle up to 1 million TEUs of cargo annually, a volume that would only be attained 24 years after development.

"The construction of Mr. Payumo's Cubi container terminal is based on the assumption that the terminal will be able to handle 900,000 TEUs annually. To put this projection into perspective, bear in mind that the current cargo throughput of Subic stands at 53,000 TEUs annually, which includes the movement of empty containers. This cargo volume includes all the products being shipped for Subic's two industrial parks and various industrial locators. In order to achieve this 900,000 TEU volume that would justify the Cubi container terminal's construction, we would need to build 18 more Subics. Obviously, this cannot be done overnight.

"Since 1998, the growth rate of the GDP of Central Luzon dropped from 6.3 percent to 3.7 percent. Its percentage share to the country's GDP dropped from 9.6 percent to 8.9 percent. Subic, having lost many of its major manufacturers such as BICC-Brand Rex Cables and Thomson Electronics, has been unable to penetrate the industrial output that used to be in Central Luzon.

"There have been no major incoming investments into Subic. However, there has been a proliferation of trading companies engaged in car smuggling activities. There have also been reports of rampant smuggling of alcohol and canned meat...

"Mr. Payumo claims that the seaport and the airport will operationally complement each other. In 1997, when the port privatization bidding was halted, the Japan International Cooperation Agency proposed to the SBMA that a container port be built in Cubi. They warned, however, that the development of a port in this area would lead to the eventual closure of the airport. Likely interference between aircraft navigational aids and port navigational equipment as tall stacks of containers and loose cargo will affect aircraft safety. In fact, when heavy equipment auctioneer Ritchie Brothers operated in the 1990s, Federal Express voiced concern over the proximity of cranes to the airport, as these would interfere with navigational aids.

"In addition, the traffic from trucks and other construction equipment in the area of Cubi Point will compromise the security of the Subic Bay International Airport. With the threat of global terrorism, there is a need to ensure that services such as the courier services of Federal Express are protected from penetration by terrorist groups. It has been reported that groups like al-Qaida are now targeting cargo carriers in the implementation of their terrorist activities. The operation of a seaport and container terminal frequented by customers, brokers, dock workers and delivery trucks beside an international airport, separated only by a fence makes the airport, whose operations are highly sensitive, extremely vulnerable."

Tomorrow: Mayor Gordon's concerns about the environment.

Lay of the land

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MY apologies to the local and foreign media who have been calling to ask me what I think about the political situation, whose calls I never returned. I have been swamped with work of late. Pepe Miranda's latest survey should answer their question in any case: It provides a pretty accurate picture of how things stand among the candidates. It's just a question of finding the reasons behind the results, and seeing under what conditions those results would hold.

That Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo would win if you have eight or nine presidential candidates stands to reason. The popular candidates—Fernando Poe Jr. and Noli de Castro in particular—would cancel out each other and the rest of the votes would be divided among the others, leaving the one with the strongest party, organization and resources, who is the incumbent, to rule the field. That is the good news for GMA, which is the one her handlers decided to trumpet to the world. The bad news for her is that it's not going to happen. Only four, or at most five, presidential aspirants will aspire.

It's not surprising that Panfilo Lacson lags far behind in a four-cornered fight between Raul Roco, FPJ, GMA and him. That follows logically from an earlier survey by Pulse Asia that showed Lacson's ratings to not have improved despite the fact that most Filipinos found his exposé on Mike Arroyo credible: The overwhelming majority thinks Mike Arroyo is Jose Pidal. That is a case of the message being credible in spite of the messenger not being so.

But that may also explain the fate of the exposé itself, which, unlike the Chavit Singson exposé on Erap, did not prosper. I did hear a lot of people articulate the problem at the time. If you pursue the Lacson exposé, they said, you would find yourself on the opposition camp. A spurious argument, but a widely held one.

But that raises the question of why Lacson lacks credibility. The answer to that is that he labors from the disadvantages of being associated with Erap while enjoying only few of its advantages. He was Erap's chief *berdugo* or enforcer. A good deal of the Chinese community is thankful to him for curbing kidnapping, but a good deal of the national community detests him for adding to other forms of crime, through the PACC. His crime-fighting was very selective, and looked calculated to benefit those that could benefit him. That hasn't been lost on the public.

Like other "tough guys" that came before him, Alfredo Lim in particular, Lacson is either loved or hated. Like Lim, who did not just appeal to the unshod but to the well-heeled who were fearful of drugs and other menaces, Lacson's strength is only in the cities where crime is a big thing. He will probably share the same fate as Lim, who ended up way down in the 1998 elections.

What Lacson does have is money. He was the most liquid senatorial candidate in the 2001 elections. He was Erap's fair-haired boy, the one Erap was grooming to succeed him, and toward that end built a war chest for him. Which almost by definition could not have come from legal sources: It is a testament to Victor Corpuz's sleuthing abilities he never managed to pin him down on this. On the contrary, it was Lacson who would raise the issue of illegal contributions against GMA.

Unfortunately for Lacson, while having the money, he doesn't have Erap's charisma. People were saying it even then: Erap's popularity is non-transferable. Lacson's showing thus far proves so.

It is not surprising either that GMA should land only third in people's preferences in a four-cornered fight. That follows too not just from Pulse Asia's earlier surveys but from those of the Social Weather Stations' and Ibon's as well. Her figures do not only show her to be less popular than the other candidates, they show her to be downright unpopular. Miranda put it succinctly during his lecture at the INQUIRER some weeks ago: There is no clear path for anyone to Malacañang. But there is a clear path for someone from Malacañang.

There are many reasons for that unpopularity. The most patent is the mess this country has gotten into over the last half-year alone. A couple of weeks ago, I spoke in several campuses, and without exception all of the students—many of them are first-time voters—expressed alarm at what was happening in the country. That in fact was the question they asked, an echo of Emmanuel Pelaez's famous line after he was ambushed during Marcos' time: "What is happening to the country?"

GMA is naturally being blamed for the mess, whether by omission (the sign on the door says, "The President is out—campaigning") or commission (Pidal, Piatco, the Davide impeachment). The President wears her ambition too brightly up her sleeve, and that can be a kiss of death. The one category of candidate that has fared badly since the early '90s has been the *trapo*, and most people define *trapo* essentially as someone who craves power so badly he, or she, would bargain with the devil himself for it.

That is a role GMA has played from the start, and one that is producing diminishing returns. She was booed at the MTV-Mandy Moore concert a couple of weeks ago. Which is nothing compared to the reception she got at a school in Lucena City, where a *tuko* loudly made itself heard while she was speaking to the laughter of students. *Kapit-tuko* is the local term for someone who clings to position.

Ramon Mitra and Jose de Venecia lost badly in the last two presidential elections precisely because they were seen as that—wheeler-dealers, *kapit-tuko, trapo*. Like GMA, they had the strongest party, organization and resources. They were the equivalent of the incumbent. Both earned notoriety leading a House whose members would sign anything, even toilet paper. Both spent lavishly but reaped poorly.

Like GMA. *(To be concluded)*

FPJ should have sent Angara to PCCI

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

LISTENING to Raul Roco over the radio as he roused up a huge crowd of supporters at the Folk Arts Theater yesterday, I felt his speech was vintage Roco. It was full of showmanship as he urged his *kababayan* to rally ("*susugurin natin ang* Malacañang *pag hindi sila nakinig*"), playing on the battle cry of Andres Bonifacio. Roco is a good speaker and an effective communicator, especially since he nearly always speaks in Filipino, which is why he resonates with the college crowd from where his volunteers come. Contrast this with the President's Cabinet members and media handlers who 'seem to always be targeting Ambassador Francis Ricciardone. But more than anything, he has that gift of making the Filipino feel good about himself as he constantly harps about the good old Filipino virtues and seeks to revive the Pinoy's faith in himself. His campaign line, "HOPE," capitalizes on it.

* * *

Roco's problem, however, is still how to convince the voters—and the financiers—that he has what it takes to translate his vast popularity into votes; this uncertainty could affect the flow of funds terribly critical to a presidential campaign. Moreover, surveys show that while he remains popular, that popularity has been going down. His problem is how to sustain it, not how not to peak too early, which his strategists fear. Note that the recent Pulse Asia survey painted a scenario, among others, that showed Roco at 30 percent, closely followed by Fernando Poe Jr. and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo at 28 percent each; but Roco's rating is down from a previous high, whereas GMA's rating has been climbing steadily from very low.

* * *

At Senate President Franklin Drilon's 58th birthday celebration last Friday evening, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry leader Miguel Varela told me that the PCCI was quite impressed by GMA's address before them earlier that day, and in fact, the members gave her a standing ovation. From accounts, the PCCI was also impressed by Roco who joined Sen. Panfilo Lacson in the candidates' forum the next day. Roco promised to battle corruption while Lacson vowed to restore peace and order. But reports say the business leaders were upset that FPJ was a no-show—not bitten by stage fright *daw*, but indisposed. What aggravated it was that FPJ sent Sen. Vicente Sotto to read a five-page message from him, when it would have been better if he sent Sen. Edgardo Angara to answer the businessmen's queries about his program and ease their anxieties a bit. After all, FPJ couldn't have gotten his LDP faction's blessing without Angara. And if he is elected, Angara would be the real power behind him.

* * *

Like the rest of the world, I was tantalized with US President Bush's bold act of traveling in utmost secrecy and security to Baghdad Airport, where he spent Thanksgiving with the US troops. It was a clever propaganda ploy which stymied the US political opposition—how can one argue against shoring up the troops' morale on Thanksgiving Day even for just two and a half hours? As Democratic presidential aspirant Joseph Libermann put it, "in this issue, we're not Democrat or Republican, we are just Americans." But as I read the elaborate preparations to keep the mission top secret, even to the point of not disclosing it even to Bush's parents, my first thought was, could we ever keep such a secret in this country where there are no secrets? The handful of journalists who joined Bush was sworn to secrecy and obviously it was respected. Could that happen here?

* * *

But equally tantalizing were the moves of Sen. Hillary Clinton, seen to be a leading Democratic contender. While Bush was treating the troops to a turkey dinner in Baghdad she was visiting the US troops in nearby Afghanistan, and one day after his visit, she shows up in Baghdad, too. But the difference was that unlike Bush, Hillary didn't stay in a tightly-secured place—she also visited the US troops in their camps. Meaning, she exposed herself to bigger danger and had no qualms about it. She keeps denying plans for 2004, but with these recent moves, who'll believe her?

* * *

Eighty-nine-year-old Fr. Pierre Tritz, the founder of the Erda Foundation that has kept legions of very poor Filipino schoolchildren in school, instead of becoming dropout statistics, had an accident in a French town near the German border last Oct. 13, while on his annual begging mission for Erda. He fell in the house of his host while hurrying to an appointment, and the brain scan showed a skull fissure which necessitated some intensive treatment at a hospital, to expel some blood from the brain. As a result, he has been forced to take some weeks' rest, which is rather difficult for this saintly priest, who's often called our "male Mother Teresa." Luckily, Fr. Tritz's relatives are in the area, and he has so many friends and admirers there.

While on a stopover in Frankfurt, Germany, en route to Manila the other week, I was able to chat on the phone with Anita Nowack, a Filipina married to a retired German banker, who founded and chairs Kinderhilfe Philippines, a valuable NGO support group for Erda in Germany. Anita lives in Saarbrucken, about 20 minutes from where Fr. Tritz is now convalescing in a rehab center, and she related that, in a recent visit, she found that he is "as talkative as ever," though he now talks about "learning a lesson about slowing down at bit." Cracked Anita: this only proves it's never too late to learn, even at age 89. She said that an award from the "Unesco Foundation for Children in Need" awaits Fr. Tritz for his humanitarian endeavors; the gala award night would have been in Dusseldorf last Nov. 8, but for the accident. Meantime, his legions of admirers are thankful to God he's on the way to full recovery.

The boys from Dadiangas

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

THE EUPHORIC multitude that greeted the homecoming of boxing icon Manny Pacquiao last Thursday in General Santos City capped the weeklong tribute for the "peoples' champion." Pacquiao's Nov. 16 victory over the highly rated world featherweight king Marco Antonio Barrera has put GenSan in the world map once again. It was also a welcome respite, although momentary, from the scandals and political brawls brought by the early onset of the election season.

My townmates, including children, lined up the streets and cheered as Pacquiao's entourage motored from the airport to City Hall where a fiesta celebration awaited him. There was a great sense of pride that surged through the people of the southern port city popularly known to outsiders as "Dadiangas." For good reason. Aside from the crown and the huge purse that went with his victory, Pacquiao also earned a Congressional Medal of Honor conferred on him by congressional leaders days prior to his homecoming. Not surprisingly, it was mostly the young, the adoring children especially, who began to look up at Pacquiao as the model in making it big to escape poverty.

Last Thursday's sight of the children brought back memories of my own childhood back in the '70s in GenSan, when I and other boys of my generation were, at one point, drawn to the world of boxing.

When I was an 8-year-old boy in 1975, my father gave me two pairs of boxing gloves so I could learn boxing and develop my then lanky build. A homemade punching bag and a makeshift ring were also built in our backyard, where I and my cousins and neighbors flailed away at each other more in youthful abandon.

1975 was also the year of the historic "Thrilla in Manila" fight between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier at the Araneta Coliseum.

Our ears were all glued to the radio that October day to follow the punishing Ali-Frazier fight but at the same time to root for two rising GenSan pugilists at that time—Rolando Navarrette and Andy Balaba—who were in separate undercard fights of the main event.

My father is an unrepentant boxing aficionado. Even after being reminded that boxing is a cruel sport, then and now, he will not let an occasion pass—either by watching a live boxing event or on television—to root for his favorite boxer. When he gave me those gloves, he told me in jest though that he does not wish to see a son of his earn a living in boxing. But since boys from Dadiangas (the then emerging haven of amateur and professional boxers) were into the sport, my father prodded me to learn a punch or two, to defend myself in a brawl just in case. Indeed, boxing had become so popular in the city at that time that boxing stables sprouted. Boxing's popularity also augured the establishment in Dadiangas of Mindanao's first-ever modern and big stadium, then called the Bernabe Coliseum, to accommodate the growing number of fights staged in the city.

Decades after the "Thrilla in Manila," GenSan saw the roller-coaster fate of many of its favorite sons. In 1981, Navarrette, dubbed the "Bad Boy from Dadiangas" was catapulted to fame when he replaced Rafael "Bazooka" Limon who withdrew at the last minute of his fight with Africa-based champion Cornellius Boza Edwards. The "replacement" proved to be a blessing in disguise for Navarrette who went on to snatch the World Boxing Council super featherweight crown from Edwards via a third round knockout.

From that victory, it seemed there was no stopping the fame and glory of Navarrette. He successfully defended his title twice, only to be ruined by career miscues and an obstinate lifestyle. He was defeated via TKO by the man he replaced when he won the crown: Bazooka Limon. His wife left him; he was convicted and served a jail term in Hawaii for rape; he became an alcoholic, deserted by once loyal and avid fans.

All that is left of his fame and fortune now are laminated memorabilia of his past glory and an unfinished gym where he planned to train future boxing champions. He may have learned some lessons but even Navarrette knows that he is now only a shadow of his former self.

If Navarrette had some luck, it was not so with Balaba. In 1982, Balaba died of brain injuries he got in a fight with a Korean boxer.

Despite the sad fate that has befallen Navarrette and Balaba, many fearless boys from Dadiangas or "Mga Batang Adiang," still follow in their footsteps. Among them are Bernie Torres (WBO Junior Bantamweight champion), Abner Cordero (WBCI Bantamweight champion) and Zarlet Rodrigo (WBCI Mini-Flyweight champion).

Last Thursday, among the happy well-wishers of Pacquiao was his 46-year-old idol Navarrette. When they posed for the camera, the unmistakable contrast was etched on their faces: an aging, battered and retired champion against a young, still raging champion. Apparently, the irony was not lost on the 26-year-old Pacquiao. He reportedly announced his plans to retire by the age of 30. Pacquiao should not let these rare blessings in his life slip from his fingers, the way it was with his boyhood idol. Pacquiao lifted the expectations of many poor young boys from Dadiangas and elsewhere who are willing to commit their lives to an uncertain future in boxing. He must not let them down.

* * *

Comments at karlos_z23@hotmail.com or kar_laws@yahoo.com

Panday versus Pidal and Paguia's jigsaw puzzle

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

PLUNDER, *n.* To wrest the wealth of A, away from B, and leave C lamenting a vanished opportunity. (From the Devil's Dictionary by misanthrope Ambrose Bierce).

Having failed spectacularly at plunder and giving way to more talented practitioners, Joseph "Erap" Estrada is rotting in jail with his busted knees. He was not even invited to the recent movie gala of Luis "Chavit" Singson. But President Macapagal-Arroyo led many of the heroes of Edsa II at the glittering civil society affair. The great statesman Jose de Venecia, welcomed "all our family of sunshine coalition partners and allies." It would have made Michael Corleone proud of such Sicilian amity in the afterglow of a thermonuclear ruling that leaves the House and Constitution reeling. Not Danding or the Brat Pack, who are still in the sunshine coalition.

But it rained long and hard on that parade the very next Wednesday. "When" you become President of the Philippines, will you pardon Joseph Estrada and set him free, FPJ was asked. To which he simply said that since Erap has not been convicted, there is no sentence to commute or crime to pardon.

Yet, whoever wins the 2004 election decides which plunder cases to pursue. For there are many chunks of P50 million that have been plundered since Edsa II. Who will deny that Jose Velarde's evil society has been matched in corruption by Jose Pidal's civil society? The only difference is that one of them allegedly has the Supreme Court in his pocket too.

Which is why, I've been spending my time in the close company of Supreme Court Justices Conchita Carpio Morales (Francisco Jr. vs House) and Reynato J. Puno (Estrada vs Arroyo). Their lethal prose is transforming the judiciary into a proving ground for moralistic theories about coordinate government that are beyond the pale of what is fit for the survival of democracy, like the one-third rule. In establishing the supremacy of judicial review, twice the justices have absolved themselves of possible culpable derelictions with their own gavels. They have overthrown one presidency and overruled the House with these holy screeds.

As a reader, I am fascinated by such incantations that change the course of the real world. As a writer, seeking to advance the art of explanation, I practice the science of overhearing the "thinking sounds" that such authors make in the artifice of their writing. I measure the soundness of their thinking against my own and that of all the great writers I have ever read and known.

(Who are the greatest writers? In my humble opinion, one is Bathsheba, the highborn noble woman who 4,000 years ago created the character Yahweh of the Pentateuch and founded the Judeo-Christian-Muslim tradition with the mighty power of her quill. William Shakespeare, whoever he really was, makes "bardolatry" my religion. Thomas Jefferson, freedom fighter, democracy's forefather, completes my short list with the excommunicated Mason, Jose Rizal, scientist and *tsismoso*.)

Landmark Supreme Court rulings form a distinctive genre of writing that is a subset of the essay form. I have found it useful to think of each ruling as a giant jigsaw puzzle which the justices assemble from all the other facts and laws involved—then a picture emerges that justifies whatever is "So ordered!"

But unlike jigsaw puzzles, the full picture of conundrums like Edsa II can radically change with a single missing piece or fact. It's more like a whodunit where the solution can change because of a single clue, a method due to the creator of Sherlock Holmes.

Alan Paguia has been vindictively and most unfairly suspended from the practice of the law by the Davide Court, in my opinion, because he was the first to find a missing piece of the puzzle that blows up Estrada vs Arroyo as a fatally flawed ruling. Not because it is wrong about the venality of Estrada, but because it deliberately hides the active role as protagonists that the justices themselves played in the very case they were judging.

But the court should really have suspended Artemio Panganiban who revealed Paguia's missing piece to people like me, who never believed Paguia before. That missing piece is a fax written by now Justice Antonio Carpio which had been solicited from the Vice President's camp by Chief Justice Hilario Davide at the insistence of Jaime Cardinal Sin and used as the basis for declaring the presidency vacant on Jan. 20, 2001. Gloria even denied she wrote such a fax claiming Erap was permanently disabled when he was not. The ruling Estrada vs Arroyo is pure evil because the ponente paints a picture of events that excludes that decisive piece of the puzzle, thinking it would never come to light. Thank you Justice Panganiban.

If this is right, swearing in Gloria was only the second wrong done by the Court that day. Wrongfully declaring the presidency vacant after asking for and accepting false proof of it—that was the root crime of Edsa II. Issuing Estrada vs Arroyo and Estrada vs Desierto in March and April were only the third and fourth crimes to cover up their own culpability. This is just a literary hypothesis about those rulings.

But when you become President, Mr. FPJ, please make Alan Paguia a justice of the Supreme Court because he practices the law in the grandest manner of all—to the point of accepting persecution with the dignity of a simple and dedicated "nut" who just wants to serve his country and the truth. *(More at http://deanjorgebocobo.blogspot.com/)*

Brouhaha over Kris' choice for president

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

WHAT is it about Kris Aquino that when she talks about something that is outside of her field of expertise, entertainment, she lands on the front page of the INQUIRER or other newspapers?

Two months ago, Kris hogged the headlines with her revelation that Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez pulled a gun on her when they had a lovers' quarrel and that he had infected her with a sexually transmitted disease. That confession made Kris a virtual poster girl for abused women in the country.

All that drama came to naught however when she withdrew the criminal complaints she filed against Marquez after the latter declared on nationwide television that he did not call her a liar and he apologized for whatever hurts he may have caused her.

The INQUIRER's coverage of le Kris-Joey affaire came under fire from many readers. They disapproved of the front-page treatment given to the charges and counter-charges of the two "kiss-and-tell" personalities. The readers felt the newspaper acted like a tabloid in its coverage of that scandal.

Last week, history repeated itself in the Nov. 22 and 23 issues of the INQUIRER. The banner of the first edition of the Nov. 22 issue read: "Kris goes for opposition." The accompanying story related her alleged decision to support the presidential candidate of the opposition in the 2004 election photo of Kris and Sen. Panfilo Lacson leaving the restaurant where that endorsement was supposedly hatched occupied almost half of the front page.

Incidentally, in the final edition of that issue, the banner was changed to "Camacho quits; peso falls" referring to the resignation of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho from the Cabinet the day before for personal reasons. The news about Kris' endorsement of the opposition's presidential candidate played second fiddle to the Camacho story. Nonetheless, the photo of Kris and Lacson remained in its original place on the front page.

Complaint

On Nov. 23, the INQUIRER's banner read: "Kris: I still have to decide." The follow-up story carried, among other items, her denial of the earlier report that she was supporting Fernando Poe Jr. or any opposition candidate in next May's polls.

The complaints I received about the newspaper's coverage of the Kris-Joey scandal pale in comparison to what I got on the report that Kris plans to back the opposition in 2004. The e-mail and letters (some were written in Filipino) expressed strong dissatisfaction with the way the INQUIRER played up her alleged choice for the top post of the land.

Jennifer Masangkay wrote: "Why did you put Kris Aquino on your front page for two days in a row? Who cares who will be her presidential candidate? I would understand if it's Cory Aquino, but Kris? Who is she anyway? She cannot even straighten up her life, so what bearing or impact will she have on the choice of candidate on the Filipino nation?"

Cesar de los Reyes commented that Kris "is having trouble managing her private life, so please tell us what makes it so important that people should know who she will support? If the idea is to get her in trouble with her family again, I think you are succeeding. Can't you see even Lacson wants to use her just as Joey did? Why not leave her alone?"

Michelle Reyes said "Kris Aquino backs so and so. She goes for the opposition. WHO CARES???? Suddenly, her political opinions are worthy of front page headlines? Puh leeze. As a reader, I feel seriously insulted. Seems like this paper is losing respect for its audience. Heads up INQUIRER. You may not look like a tabloid, but you're starting to read like one."

News value

I learned that the reason Kris was given premium treatment on those two days was because the editorial staff felt her endorsement of the opposition had strong news value. Considering her parentage and political lineage, Kris may be considered a public figure whose statements and actions often catch the public's attention.

Besides, her action appeared to put her on a collision course with her mother, former President Cory Aquino, who had been very supportive of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the crises that have hit her administration lately. Also, Kris' only brother, Rep. Noynoy Aquino, has announced several times in the past that he is in favor of Ms Macapagal's reelection bid.

On the other hand, the Nov. 23 banner was meant to be a follow-up story to the previous-day's report on Kris' plan to go for the opposition's presidential candidate in the 2004 polls. This time, the focus was on her denial of her tilt toward the opposition and her brother's expression of dismay for that reported action.

After knowing the circumstances behind the two banner stories complained about, I was reminded of an article I read somewhere about the difference between news that people need to know and news that people want to know. The "need to read" news includes those that would have an impact on the people's work, wages, family and other important necessities of life. To the "want to read" category belongs news about sex, intrigue, entertainment and those that seek to divert the people's attention from their daily problems.

Questionable value

I am sympathetic to the views of the readers who questioned the wisdom of the INQUIRER giving Kris' alleged political preference in the 2004 elections blazing front-page treatment. By doing that, the newspaper gave the public the impression that Kris is a "kingmaker" of sorts whose blessings could spell the difference between victory and defeat in the polls.

While Kris enjoys some degree of popularity because of her TV shows and embarrassing escapades, she has not established herself as somebody who can draw votes for or against political candidates. She has not participated in any political exercise that would have tested her vote-getting capacity. All she has going for her are a pretty face, glib tongue and the accident of being the daughter of a former president and a martyr.

Whatever credibility or influence she may have had over some people of voting age was seriously eroded when she made a big fuss about her plan to punish her former (or still?) lover Mayor Joey Marquez for threatening her with a gun, only to backtrack after he soothed her ego with a public apology. The sudden turnaround, to the public's dismay, exposed the true depth of her morality and integrity.

In my opinion, the news in question should have been placed, if at all, in the Entertainment or Metro section, not on the front page.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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FPJ should have sent Angara to PCCI

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

LISTENING to Raul Roco over the radio as he roused up a huge crowd of supporters at the Folk Arts Theater yesterday, I felt his speech was vintage Roco. It was full of showmanship as he urged his *kababayan* to rally ("*susugurin natin ang* Malacañang *pag hindi sila nakinig*"), playing on the battle cry of Andres Bonifacio. Roco is a good speaker and an effective communicator, especially since he nearly always speaks in Filipino, which is why he resonates with the college crowd from where his volunteers come. Contrast this with the President's Cabinet members and media handlers who 'seem to always be targeting Ambassador Francis Ricciardone. But more than anything, he has that gift of making the Filipino feel good about himself as he constantly harps about the good old Filipino virtues and seeks to revive the Pinoy's faith in himself. His campaign line, "HOPE," capitalizes on it.

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Like the rest of the world, I was tantalized with US President Bush's bold act of traveling in utmost secrecy and security to Baghdad Airport, where he spent Thanksgiving with the US troops. It was a clever propaganda ploy which stymied the US political opposition—how can one argue against shoring up the troops' morale on Thanksgiving Day even for just two and a half hours? As Democratic presidential aspirant Joseph Libermann put it, "in this issue, we're not Democrat or Republican, we are just Americans." But as I read the elaborate preparations to keep the mission top secret, even to the point of not disclosing it even to Bush's parents, my first thought was, could we ever keep such a secret in this country where there are no secrets? The handful of journalists who joined Bush was sworn to secrecy and obviously it was respected. Could that happen here?

* * *

But equally tantalizing were the moves of Sen. Hillary Clinton, seen to be a leading Democratic contender. While Bush was treating the troops to a turkey dinner in Baghdad she was visiting the US troops in nearby Afghanistan, and one day after his visit, she shows up in Baghdad, too. But the difference was that unlike Bush, Hillary didn't stay in a tightly-secured place—she also visited the US troops in their camps. Meaning, she exposed herself to bigger danger and had no qualms about it. She keeps denying plans for 2004, but with these recent moves, who'll believe her?

* * *

Eighty-nine-year-old Fr. Pierre Tritz, the founder of the Erda Foundation that has kept legions of very poor Filipino schoolchildren in school, instead of becoming dropout statistics, had an accident in a French town near the German border last Oct. 13, while on his annual begging mission for Erda. He fell in the house of his host while hurrying to an appointment, and the brain scan showed a skull fissure which necessitated some intensive treatment at a hospital, to expel some blood from the brain. As a result, he has been forced to take some weeks' rest, which is rather difficult for this saintly priest, who's often called our "male Mother Teresa." Luckily, Fr. Tritz's relatives are in the area, and he has so many friends and admirers there.

While on a stopover in Frankfurt, Germany, en route to Manila the other week, I was able to chat on the phone with Anita Nowack, a Filipina married to a retired German banker, who founded and chairs Kinderhilfe Philippines, a valuable NGO support group for Erda in Germany. Anita lives in Saarbrucken, about 20 minutes from where Fr. Tritz is now convalescing in a rehab center, and she related that, in a recent visit, she found that he is "as talkative as ever," though he now talks about "learning a lesson about slowing down at bit." Cracked Anita: this only proves it's never too late to learn, even at age 89. She said that an award from the "Unesco Foundation for Children in Need" awaits Fr. Tritz for his humanitarian endeavors; the gala award night would have been in Dusseldorf last Nov. 8, but for the accident. Meantime, his legions of admirers are thankful to God he's on the way to full recovery.

The boys from Dadiangas

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

THE EUPHORIC multitude that greeted the homecoming of boxing icon Manny Pacquiao last Thursday in General Santos City capped the weeklong tribute for the "peoples' champion." Pacquiao's Nov. 16 victory over the highly rated world featherweight king Marco Antonio Barrera has put GenSan in the world map once again. It was also a welcome respite, although momentary, from the scandals and political brawls brought by the early onset of the election season.

My townmates, including children, lined up the streets and cheered as Pacquiao's entourage motored from the airport to City Hall where a fiesta celebration awaited him. There was a great sense of pride that surged through the people of the southern port city popularly known to outsiders as "Dadiangas." For good reason. Aside from the crown and the huge purse that went with his victory, Pacquiao also earned a Congressional Medal of Honor conferred on him by congressional leaders days prior to his homecoming. Not surprisingly, it was mostly the young, the adoring children especially, who began to look up at Pacquiao as the model in making it big to escape poverty.

Last Thursday's sight of the children brought back memories of my own childhood back in the '70s in GenSan, when I and other boys of my generation were, at one point, drawn to the world of boxing.

When I was an 8-year-old boy in 1975, my father gave me two pairs of boxing gloves so I could learn boxing and develop my then lanky build. A homemade punching bag and a makeshift ring were also built in our backyard, where I and my cousins and neighbors flailed away at each other more in youthful abandon.

1975 was also the year of the historic "Thrilla in Manila" fight between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier at the Araneta Coliseum.

Our ears were all glued to the radio that October day to follow the punishing Ali-Frazier fight but at the same time to root for two rising GenSan pugilists at that time—Rolando Navarrette and Andy Balaba—who were in separate undercard fights of the main event.

My father is an unrepentant boxing aficionado. Even after being reminded that boxing is a cruel sport, then and now, he will not let an occasion pass—either by watching a live boxing event or on television—to root for his favorite boxer. When he gave me those gloves, he told me in jest though that he does not wish to see a son of his earn a living in boxing. But since boys from Dadiangas (the then emerging haven of amateur and professional boxers) were into the sport, my father prodded me to learn a punch or two, to defend myself in a brawl just in case. Indeed, boxing had become so popular in the city at that time that boxing stables sprouted. Boxing's popularity also augured the establishment in Dadiangas of Mindanao's first-ever modern and big stadium, then called the Bernabe Coliseum, to accommodate the growing number of fights staged in the city.

Decades after the "Thrilla in Manila," GenSan saw the roller-coaster fate of many of its favorite sons. In 1981, Navarrette, dubbed the "Bad Boy from Dadiangas" was catapulted to fame when he replaced Rafael "Bazooka" Limon who withdrew at the last minute of his fight with Africa-based champion Cornellius Boza Edwards. The "replacement" proved to be a blessing in disguise for Navarrette who went on to snatch the World Boxing Council super featherweight crown from Edwards via a third round knockout.

From that victory, it seemed there was no stopping the fame and glory of Navarrette. He successfully defended his title twice, only to be ruined by career miscues and an obstinate lifestyle. He was defeated via TKO by the man he replaced when he won the crown: Bazooka Limon. His wife left him; he was convicted and served a jail term in Hawaii for rape; he became an alcoholic, deserted by once loyal and avid fans.

All that is left of his fame and fortune now are laminated memorabilia of his past glory and an unfinished gym where he planned to train future boxing champions. He may have learned some lessons but even Navarrette knows that he is now only a shadow of his former self.

If Navarrette had some luck, it was not so with Balaba. In 1982, Balaba died of brain injuries he got in a fight with a Korean boxer.

Despite the sad fate that has befallen Navarrette and Balaba, many fearless boys from Dadiangas or "Mga Batang Adiang," still follow in their footsteps. Among them are Bernie Torres (WBO Junior Bantamweight champion), Abner Cordero (WBCI Bantamweight champion) and Zarlet Rodrigo (WBCI Mini-Flyweight champion).

Last Thursday, among the happy well-wishers of Pacquiao was his 46-year-old idol Navarrette. When they posed for the camera, the unmistakable contrast was etched on their faces: an aging, battered and retired champion against a young, still raging champion. Apparently, the irony was not lost on the 26-year-old Pacquiao. He reportedly announced his plans to retire by the age of 30. Pacquiao should not let these rare blessings in his life slip from his fingers, the way it was with his boyhood idol. Pacquiao lifted the expectations of many poor young boys from Dadiangas and elsewhere who are willing to commit their lives to an uncertain future in boxing. He must not let them down.

* * *

Comments at karlos_z23@hotmail.com or kar_laws@yahoo.com

Panday versus Pidal and Paguia's jigsaw puzzle

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

PLUNDER, *n.* To wrest the wealth of A, away from B, and leave C lamenting a vanished opportunity. (From the Devil's Dictionary by misanthrope Ambrose Bierce).

Having failed spectacularly at plunder and giving way to more talented practitioners, Joseph "Erap" Estrada is rotting in jail with his busted knees. He was not even invited to the recent movie gala of Luis "Chavit" Singson. But President Macapagal-Arroyo led many of the heroes of Edsa II at the glittering civil society affair. The great statesman Jose de Venecia, welcomed "all our family of sunshine coalition partners and allies." It would have made Michael Corleone proud of such Sicilian amity in the afterglow of a thermonuclear ruling that leaves the House and Constitution reeling. Not Danding or the Brat Pack, who are still in the sunshine coalition.

But it rained long and hard on that parade the very next Wednesday. "When" you become President of the Philippines, will you pardon Joseph Estrada and set him free, FPJ was asked. To which he simply said that since Erap has not been convicted, there is no sentence to commute or crime to pardon.

Yet, whoever wins the 2004 election decides which plunder cases to pursue. For there are many chunks of P50 million that have been plundered since Edsa II. Who will deny that Jose Velarde's evil society has been matched in corruption by Jose Pidal's civil society? The only difference is that one of them allegedly has the Supreme Court in his pocket too.

Which is why, I've been spending my time in the close company of Supreme Court Justices Conchita Carpio Morales (Francisco Jr. vs House) and Reynato J. Puno (Estrada vs Arroyo). Their lethal prose is transforming the judiciary into a proving ground for moralistic theories about coordinate government that are beyond the pale of what is fit for the survival of democracy, like the one-third rule. In establishing the supremacy of judicial review, twice the justices have absolved themselves of possible culpable derelictions with their own gavels. They have overthrown one presidency and overruled the House with these holy screeds.

As a reader, I am fascinated by such incantations that change the course of the real world. As a writer, seeking to advance the art of explanation, I practice the science of overhearing the "thinking sounds" that such authors make in the artifice of their writing. I measure the soundness of their thinking against my own and that of all the great writers I have ever read and known.

(Who are the greatest writers? In my humble opinion, one is Bathsheba, the highborn noble woman who 4,000 years ago created the character Yahweh of the Pentateuch and founded the Judeo-Christian-Muslim tradition with the mighty power of her quill. William Shakespeare, whoever he really was, makes "bardolatry" my religion. Thomas Jefferson, freedom fighter, democracy's forefather, completes my short list with the excommunicated Mason, Jose Rizal, scientist and *tsismoso*.)

Landmark Supreme Court rulings form a distinctive genre of writing that is a subset of the essay form. I have found it useful to think of each ruling as a giant jigsaw puzzle which the justices assemble from all the other facts and laws involved—then a picture emerges that justifies whatever is "So ordered!"

But unlike jigsaw puzzles, the full picture of conundrums like Edsa II can radically change with a single missing piece or fact. It's more like a whodunit where the solution can change because of a single clue, a method due to the creator of Sherlock Holmes.

Alan Paguia has been vindictively and most unfairly suspended from the practice of the law by the Davide Court, in my opinion, because he was the first to find a missing piece of the puzzle that blows up Estrada vs Arroyo as a fatally flawed ruling. Not because it is wrong about the venality of Estrada, but because it deliberately hides the active role as protagonists that the justices themselves played in the very case they were judging.

But the court should really have suspended Artemio Panganiban who revealed Paguia's missing piece to people like me, who never believed Paguia before. That missing piece is a fax written by now Justice Antonio Carpio which had been solicited from the Vice President's camp by Chief Justice Hilario Davide at the insistence of Jaime Cardinal Sin and used as the basis for declaring the presidency vacant on Jan. 20, 2001. Gloria even denied she wrote such a fax claiming Erap was permanently disabled when he was not. The ruling Estrada vs Arroyo is pure evil because the **ponente** paints a picture of events that excludes that decisive piece of the puzzle, thinking it would never come to light. Thank you Justice Panganiban.

If this is right, swearing in Gloria was only the second wrong done by the Court that day. Wrongfully declaring the presidency vacant after asking for and accepting false proof of it—that was the root crime of Edsa II. Issuing Estrada vs Arroyo and Estrada vs Desierto in March and April were only the third and fourth crimes to cover up their own culpability. This is just a literary hypothesis about those rulings.

But when you become President, Mr. FPJ, please make Alan Paguia a justice of the Supreme Court because he practices the law in the grandest manner of all—to the point of accepting persecution with the dignity of a simple and dedicated "nut" who just wants to serve his country and the truth. *(More at http://deanjorgebocobo.blogspot.com/)*

Brouhaha over Kris' choice for president

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

WHAT is it about Kris Aquino that when she talks about something that is outside of her field of expertise, entertainment, she lands on the front page of the INQUIRER or other newspapers?

Two months ago, Kris hogged the headlines with her revelation that Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez pulled a gun on her when they had a lovers' quarrel and that he had infected her with a sexually transmitted disease. That confession made Kris a virtual poster girl for abused women in the country.

All that drama came to naught however when she withdrew the criminal complaints she filed against Marquez after the latter declared on nationwide television that he did not call her a liar and he apologized for whatever hurts he may have caused her.

The INQUIRER's coverage of le Kris-Joey affaire came under fire from many readers. They disapproved of the front-page treatment given to the charges and counter-charges of the two "kiss-and-tell" personalities. The readers felt the newspaper acted like a tabloid in its coverage of that scandal.

Last week, history repeated itself in the Nov. 22 and 23 issues of the INQUIRER. The banner of the first edition of the Nov. 22 issue read: "Kris goes for opposition." The accompanying story related her alleged decision to support the presidential candidate of the opposition in the 2004 elections. A photo of Kris and Sen. Panfilo Lacson leaving the restaurant where that endorsement was supposedly hatched occupied almost half of the front page.

Incidentally, in the final edition of that issue, the banner was changed to "Camacho quits; peso falls" referring to the resignation of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho from the Cabinet the day before for personal reasons. The news about Kris' endorsement of the opposition's presidential candidate played second fiddle to the Camacho story. Nonetheless, the photo of Kris and Lacson remained in its original place on the front page.

Complaint

On Nov. 23, the INQUIRER's banner read: "Kris: I still have to decide." The follow-up story carried, among other items, her denial of the earlier report that she was supporting Fernando Poe Jr. or any opposition candidate in next May's polls.

The complaints I received about the newspaper's coverage of the Kris-Joey scandal pale in comparison to what I got on the report that Kris plans to back the opposition in 2004. The e-mail and letters (some were written in Filipino) expressed strong dissatisfaction with the way the INQUIRER played up her alleged choice for the top post of the land.

Jennifer Masangkay wrote: "Why did you put Kris Aquino on your front page for two days in a row? Who cares who will be her presidential candidate? I would understand if it's Cory Aquino, but Kris? Who is she anyway? She cannot even straighten up her life, so what bearing or impact will she have on the choice of candidate on the Filipino nation?"

Cesar de los Reyes commented that Kris "is having trouble managing her private life, so please tell us what makes it so important that people should know who she will support? If the idea is to get her in trouble with her family again, I think you are succeeding. Can't you see even Lacson wants to use her just as Joey did? Why not leave her alone?"

Michelle Reyes said "Kris Aquino backs so and so. She goes for the opposition. WHO CARES???? Suddenly, her political opinions are worthy of front page headlines? Puhleeze. As a reader, I feel seriously insulted. Seems like this paper is losing respect for its audience. Heads up INQUIRER. You may not look like a tabloid, but you're starting to read like one."

News value

I learned that the reason Kris was given premium treatment on those two days was because the editorial staff felt her endorsement of the opposition had strong news value. Considering her parentage and political lineage, Kris may be considered a public figure whose statements and actions often catch the public's attention.

Besides, her action appeared to put her on a collision course with her mother, former President Cory Aquino, who had been very supportive of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the crises that have hit her administration lately. Also, Kris' only brother, Rep. Noynoy Aquino, has announced several times in the past that he is in favor of Ms Macapagal's reelection bid.

On the other hand, the Nov. 23 banner was meant to be a follow-up story to the previous-day's report on Kris' plan to go for the opposition's presidential candidate in the 2004 polls. This time, the focus was on her denial of her tilt toward the opposition and her brother's expression of dismay for that reported action.

After knowing the circumstances behind the two banner stories complained about, I was reminded of an article I read somewhere about the difference between news that people need to know and news that people want to know. The "need to read" news includes those that would have an impact on the people's work, wages, family and other important necessities of life. To the "want to read" category belongs news about sex, intrigue, entertainment and those that seek to divert the people's attention from their daily problems.

Questionable value

I am sympathetic to the views of the readers who questioned the wisdom of the INQUIRER giving Kris' alleged political preference in the 2004 elections blazing front-page treatment. By doing that, the newspaper gave the public the impression that Kris is a "kingmaker" of sorts whose blessings could spell the difference between victory and defeat in the polls.

While Kris enjoys some degree of popularity because of her TV shows and embarrassing escapades, she has not established herself as somebody who can draw votes for or against political candidates. She has not participated in any political exercise that would have tested her vote-getting capacity. All she has going for her are a pretty face, glib tongue and the accident of being the daughter of a former president and a martyr.

Whatever credibility or influence she may have had over some people of voting age was seriously eroded when she made a big fuss about her plan to punish her former (or still?) lover Mayor Joey Marquez for threatening her with a gun, only to backtrack after he soothed her ego with a public apology. The sudden turnaround, to the public's dismay, exposed the true depth of her morality and integrity.

In my opinion, the news in question should have been placed, if at all, in the Entertainment or Metro section, not on the front page.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

To remember Johnny Frivaldo

VLADIMIR Ramon B. Frivaldo, legislative staff officer, and lawyer Sannah B. Frivaldo, chief of staff in the Office of Rep. Jose G. Solis—grandchildren of eight-term Sorsogon Gov. Juan G. Frivaldo—are trying to write the memoirs of their grandfather, fondly called "Tata Owan" by his friends and constituents. This is the first serious attempt to write about the life and exploits of the popular governor.

A modest but beautiful Gov. Juan G. Frivaldo T-shirt will be given (until stocks last—because they are having these made using their government salaries to fund this endeavor) to anyone who could provide pictures with captions (if at all possible, stating the place, date and persons in the pictures) or write about their remembrances of Tata Owan in a section to be called "I Remember Gov. Juan G. Frivaldo, The Last American Governor."

The final draft of the memoir that Tata Owan wrote himself was among several valuable books, plaques, trophies and awards that were gutted by the fire in 1992 that razed his old house in Manila.

By helping us, more will be able to read and relive anecdotes about the Philippines' longest-serving governor in our coming book. He died at the St. Peter and Paul Hospital, an unknown hospital in Balogo, Sorsogon. He was buried in a little-known graveyard in his hometown.

Please mail your letters or pictures with your return address to Vladimir Ramon B. Frivaldo, 15 Granite Rd., Pilar Village, 17150 Las Piñas City; e-mail: vladimir_frivaldo@yahoo.com, Tel No. (02) 569-42734, Mobile Nos.: (0920) 2300343/(0920) 9236909.

Sannah and I would welcome any suggestion, correction, addition and subtraction that any critics may offer.

To all our dear friends, *Dios marhay sa indo gabos!*

—VLADIMIR RAMON B. FRIVALDO,
15 Granite Rd., Pilar Village,
1750 Las Piñas City

LETTERS

Potholes filled, now for the lights

THIS is in connection with the letter titled "Unlighted, potholed infrastructure" by Ronnie Rabino last Oct. 6, 2003.

According to engineer Mikinug Macud, OIC district engineer of the DPWH South Manila Engineering District, upon receipt of the complaint, his office immediately conducted an ocular inspection and coordinated with other DPWH officials to solve the problem. On Oct. 17, the maintenance crew conducted asphalt patching on the potholes along South Superhighway from Zobel Roxas Street to President Quirino Avenue (both North- and South-bound).

—JENNIFER D. PUNZALAN,
officer in charge,
Public Information Division,
Office of the Secretary,
Department of Public Works
and Highways, Manila

PMAP is entirely different from PMAP'

AS I was reading the INQUIRER last Nov. 8, as I always do in the morning, the photo on the front page caught my attention. It showed some members of the People's Movement Against Poverty described by a caption below the photo which read: "Flaming Rage. The rage of protesters belonging to about 20 organizations, including the PMAP and the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc., roars up and down Ayala Avenue in Makati City. Burning effigies of President Macapagal and Chief Justice Davide, they demanded the resignation of the former and the impeachment of the latter." Fortunately, in the following day's issue of the INQUIRER, there was no mention of the acronym.

I would like to believe that the acronym "PMAP" was used simply to fit the statement into a limited space. However, the effect of using the same acronym as our association's, brings some confusion before the public. Some of our members have complained that their respective companies have called their attention why our association is involved in political activities. Of course, we always continue to say that the PMAP being referred to is different from our very own.

I am confident that with your previous dealings with our association, you have always regarded us as responsible members of our profession. Since the time the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) was established in 1956, we have always tried and continue to try our best to elevate the bar of professionalism in the field of Human Resource Management. In fact, our association is registered before the Securities and Exchange Commission.

It is sad, if after all these efforts, we will be labeled and sometimes taunted that our association has members who have been involved in various political activities as mentioned in the papers every now and then. While we respect the right of the members of the People's Movement Against Poverty to be involved in political activities, we hope that we could be differentiated because we are two different organizations with different visions and objectives. Although we continue to explain that we are a different group, the acronym confuses the public no end.

In the light of the above, may we request your assistance in correcting the confusion brought about by the use of the same acronym. The INQUIRER's editorial staff can differentiate us by properly spelling out the full name of the organization whenever there is a need to put it in print.

—RAMON S. MEDINA,
president,
Personnel
Management
Association
of the Philippines,
PMAP Center,
670 Lee St.,
Addition Hills,
Mandaluyong City

CDCP engineers built San Juanico Bridge

I WISH to bring to your attention an article published in the INQUIRER's Lifestyle section last Oct. 20.

The headline on Page D1 read: "Remembering Pedro Bayle, builder of bridges and hearts" and on the side "The builder of San Juanico Bridge was a world-class engineer..."

I have gone over the article and found no specific explanation as to how he designed and built San Juanico Bridge.

Records will show that in 1968-69, the then Bureau of Public Highways called for bids to undertake the "design, construction and financing" of the said bridge project. The Construction and Development Corp. of the Philippines (CDCP) (now renamed Philippine National Construction Corp. [PNCC]) was awarded the contract.

As the president of CDCP then, our design and engineering staff, together with Japanese engineers, undertook a detailed survey, study and analysis of the site and from that data proceeded to design the bridge as it now stands. I do not remember having in our employ the person of "Pedro Bayle."

I am sure the INQUIRER stands for truth in its publication and would not allow the printing of incorrect/erroneous information.

—RODOLFO M. CUENCA,
Ferigate Building, 448 Edsa,
Guadalupe, Makati City

A 'plant bamboo' national project

I WOULD like to suggest that Congress pass a law that will require the 79 provinces and 1,496 municipalities throughout the country to set aside so many hectares of land in their respective localities and devote them entirely to the planting of bamboo trees. This should be a top priority of the government because of the many advantages that bamboo offers.

Aside from adding beauty to the landscape, bamboo can also prevent soil erosion especially when planted on riverbanks. On top of these, bamboo provides us with food (shoots or *labong*), building materials for houses and materials for our furniture industry. Also, bamboo is very important to the growth of our economy as shown by the experience of China which earned US$160 million (1995 figures) in export earnings from canned bamboo shoots and handicrafts.

Hence, to the Chinese, bamboo has always been called "green gold" over the centuries.

—PAUL R. MORTEL,
MBLA Court, Malanday,
Marikina City 1805

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

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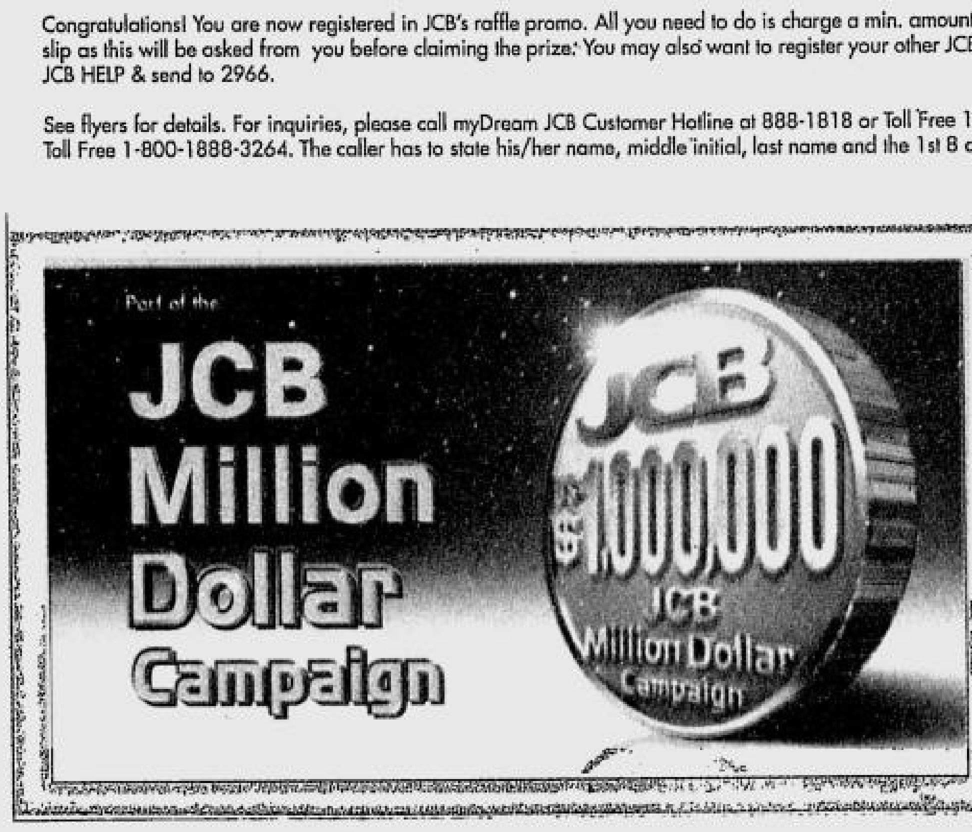

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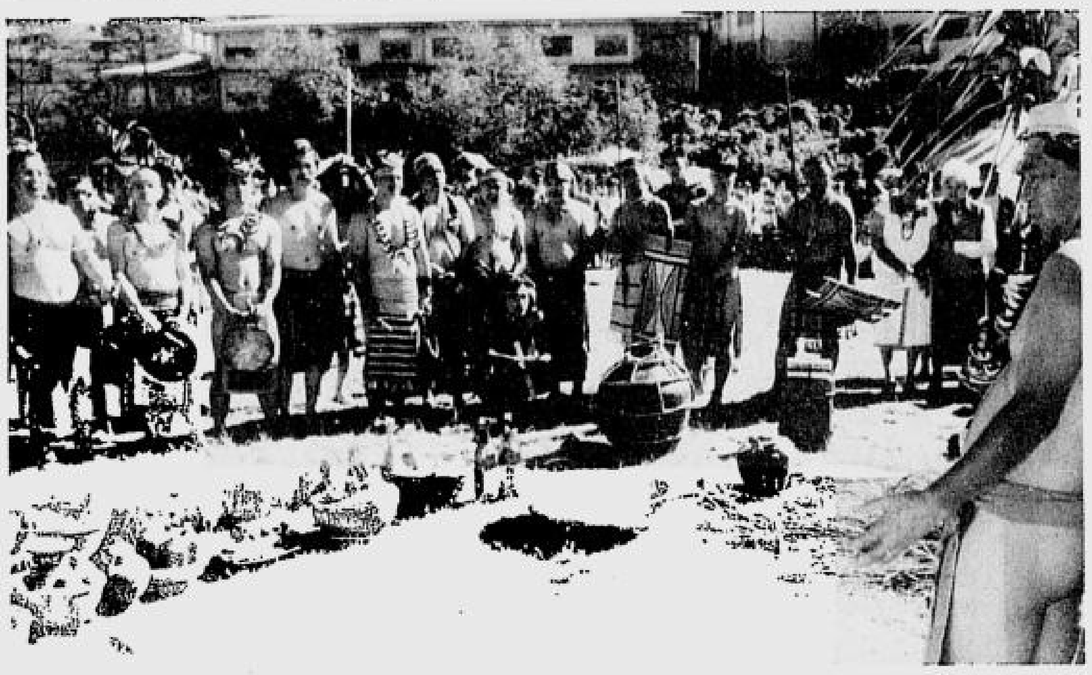
Dentist, nephew freed from captors


BAGUIO politicians revive the Grand Cañao in time for the end of the 18th Philippine Advertising Congress. No delegates showed up to watch it, however.
EV ESPIRITU

ZAMBOANGA CITY—After more than two months in captivity, a dentist and his nephew were freed from their captors after an encounter in Parang, Sulu on Saturday night.

Brig. General Alexander Yapching, 104th Army Brigade chief, said the rescued victims, Dr. Romeo Lao and his nephew Amor Propio Rubio, looked "haggard, groggy, dirty and very tired when we got them after the encounter."

Lao and Rubio were rescued shortly before midnight of Saturday in Barangay Lagasan in Parang. They were kidnapped on Scott Road in the capital town of Jolo on Sept. 7.

Prior to the rescue, Lao's relatives reportedly negotiated for the payment of ransom.

Brig. General Nelson Allaga, 3rd Marine Brigade commander, said that based on intelligence information, the kidnappers were demanding P15 million in ransom.

"But with the encounter that lasted for about 15 minutes, I don't think there was ransom paid," Yapching said.

The rescue succeeded because of the "timely relay of information from our reliable informant," he said.

Yapching believes some of the kidnappers, led by a certain Kamir Amil, were wounded in the encounter. He said it was impossible for the soldiers to recover the victims if the kidnappers did not suffer any casualty.

The victims were still undergoing physical check-up at the Camp Navarro Hospital inside the Southern Command headquarters here.

They were airlifted from Jolo to this city at around 8 a.m. yesterday. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

7,000 workers in Negros want ID scrapped

ABOUT 7,000 Negrenses went to two separate rallies in Bacolod City to commemorate the 107th death anniversary of national hero Andres Bonifacio.

About 2,000 protestors participated in the rally spearheaded by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in front of the Bacolod City Hall.

At least 5,000 people were in the rally initiated by the Sanlakas in front of the Welcome Rotunda at the Bacolod Public Plaza.

Both groups vowed to continue the struggle of Bonifacio to uplift the lives of the struggling Filipino people. They also expressed their opposition to the plan of President Macapagal-Arroyo to impose the national identification system.

Ms Macapagal on Saturday said she was bent on pushing a single national ID system "to deter criminals and terrorists and deprive them of sanctuary among our law-abiding citizens."

Partido ng Manggagawa Party-list Rep. Rene Magtubo, who spoke during the rally of the Sanlakas, said people already had identification cards.

"To curb corruption and criminality to achieve peace and order, government should improve the criminal justice system. The problem cannot be solved by an ID system," Magtubo said.

He said he believed that the national ID system was designed by the government to harass leaders of people's organizations so they could keep close tabs on them.

Richard Sarrosa, chair of Bayan-Negros and the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas-Negros, and regional coordinator of the Anak Pawis, said the ID system would deprive the people of their right to privacy.

In Calamba City, about 1,500 workers staged a rally to declare their frustrations over the government's policy of globalization.

The workers belonging to the Partido ng Manggagawa, Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino and Calabarzon Workers Alliance, called on those aspiring for presidency to lay down their agenda for the labor sector. Ferdie Perez, PM head in Southern Tagalog, challenged all "presidentiables" to present solutions to the various problems that affect the working class.

The Calabarzon workers also demanded a wage increase since no wage order for the region was given corresponding to that released in the National Capital Region two years ago. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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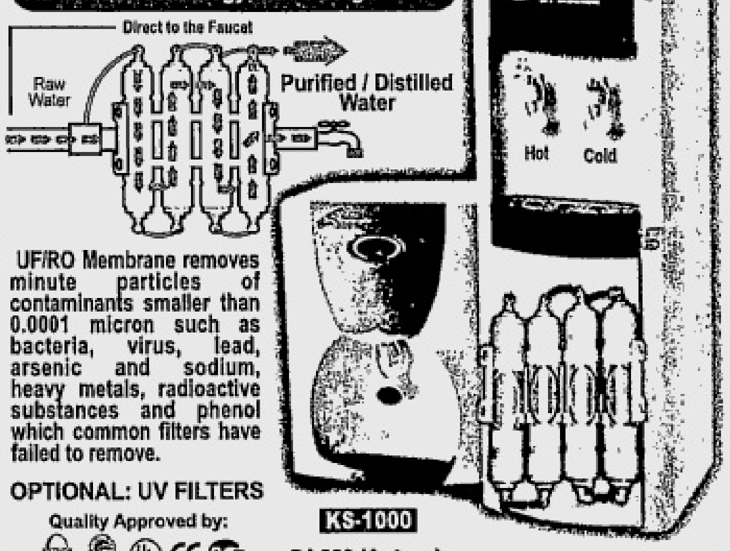

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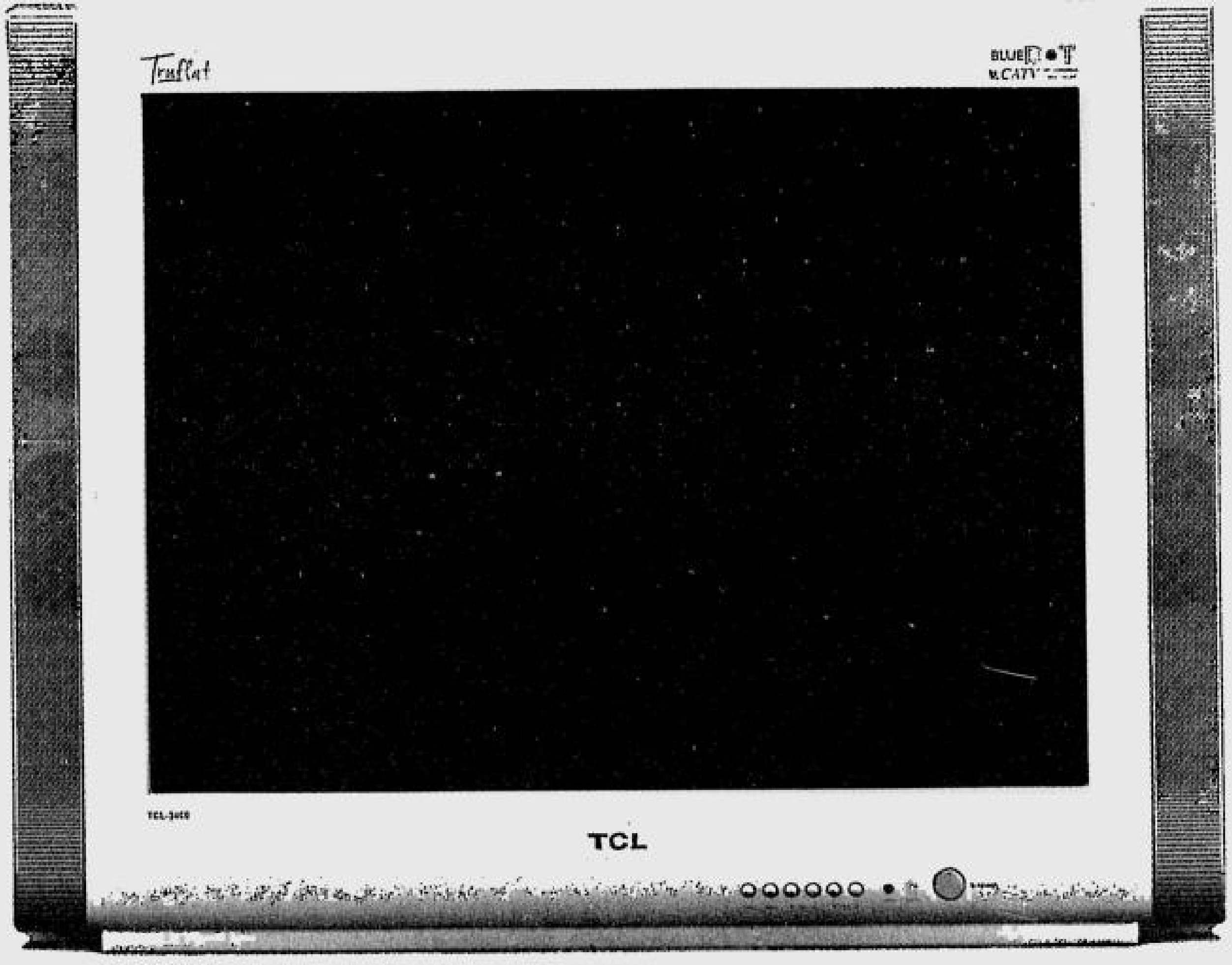

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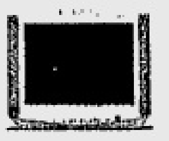
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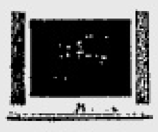
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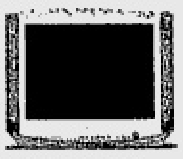
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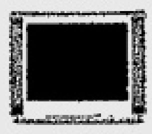

2011 Classic

Iloilo groups want to dispose of condom ordinance

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Members of the groups of militant women and guest relations officers here want to scrap the city's condom ordinance that aims to combat the possible rash of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV-AIDS.

Gabriela and the GROs said the ordinance, which targets a 100 percent condom use in all entertainment establishments, violates their human rights.

Gabriela recently staged a picket at city hall while the group composed of GROs working at a leading entertainment center in the city said they would take legal action.

Ordinance No. 2002-237, otherwise known as the 100 percent Condom Use Ordinance, requires owners of entertainment establishments to display and make available condoms for their clients and workers. It also requires owners to encourage entertainers to carry condoms and help educate customers how to use them.

Sex workers have to submit themselves for medical check-up every week. Establishments found violating the ordinance would be fined from P1,000 to P2,000 or temporarily closed down up to 15 days.

In a statement, Gabriela Panay described the ordinance as "anti-women, oppressive and discriminatory" as it treats all women working in entertainment establishments as commercial sex workers and prostitutes. Aside from carrying condoms, they have to undergo a weekly medical check-up that would cost them P100.

The P400 fee for monthly medical check up is already equivalent to "a half-sack of rice or at least two large cans of ordinary baby's milk," Gabriela said.

Gabriela said the city government should instead address poverty and lack of jobs as the main reason why women engaged in prostitution.

The GROs' lawyer, Romeo Gerochi, said the ordinance violates the national laws and constitutional rights of his clients working at the Sandpipers KTV and Music Lounge.

Gerochi said Sandpipers KTV "does not engage in prostitution business," and the ordinance illegally presumes that it is so.

He said his clients are being "classified and given the stigma of being prostitutes, when they are not."

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas said he would continue to implement the ordinance because the STI and HIV/AIDS are public health safety and public health issues, and the use of condoms is a way of preventing their spread.

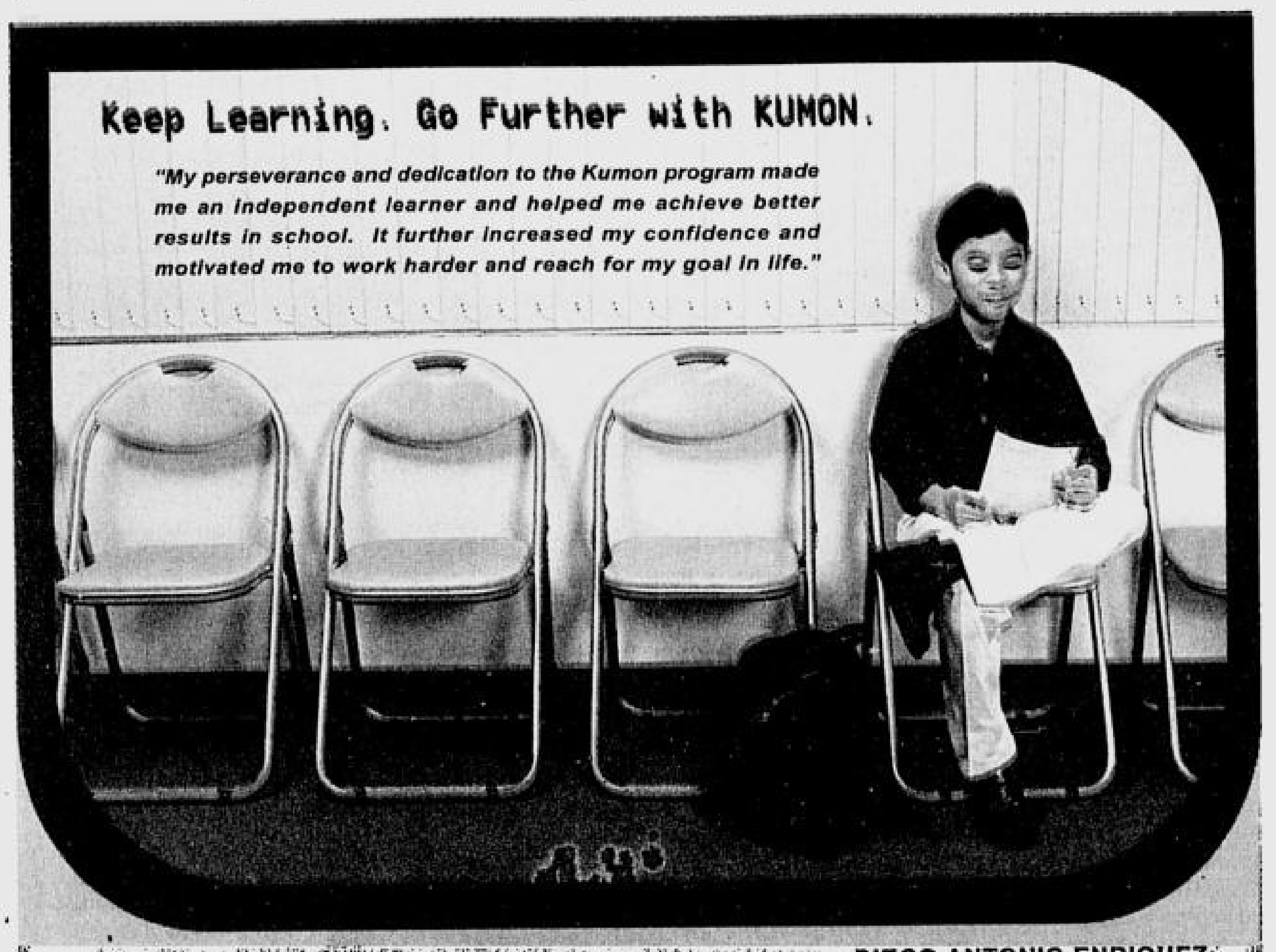
"If you have a condom in your wallet it does not mean that you will use it, or you engage in sex trade," said Treñas.

Treñas said GROs could go to court if they want the weekly medical check-up scrapped.

The condom ordinance was enacted last year as a result of strong lobby of some women's groups here like the Kabalaka-Reproductive Health Center and Process Foundation that give free medical services for commercial sex workers (CSWs).

Other women's groups supported the hundred percent condom use ordinance but wanted the mandatory testing of CSWs for sexually transmitted diseases scrapped. Members of Ugsad, the regional gender resource center based at the University of the Philippines-Visayas, said the testing is unfair for CSWs because their clients were also not tested for STIs.

Supporters of the ordinance said the condom use would prevent the possible rise of STI cases in the city. They said there is a low condom use in entertainment firms in Iloilo City.



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Albay folk slam NPA executions

LEGAZPI CITY—At least 200 families, mostly with relatives who were victims of New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas, joined a rally led by the Kilusan Kontra Komunismo (KKK) on Friday at the Peñaranda Park here, denouncing the abuse and killing of an army officer and several others.

"CPP-NPA salot sa bayan," "CPP-NPA perwisyo sa mamamayan" and "CPP-NPA demonyo," were written on their placards.

Lawyer Ricardo Nepomuceno, KKK president, said their rally aimed to condemn the inhumane acts of the communist rebels towards fellow Filipinos, including non-combatant military men.

In just two months, NPA rebels have killed three non-combatant military men, he said. One was a cook while the other was a member of the medical team based in the 901st Infantry Brigade based in Camp Villahermosa in Daraga, Albay, he added.

The recent victim was S/Sgt. Juanito Tandoc of the 22nd Infantry Battalion based in Tula-Tula, Ligao City, who he said was a member of a military medical mission team.

Tandoc was abducted on Wednesday last week in Barangay Mauraro in Guinobatan town and was killed later as confirmed by Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Tandoc's wife Wilma and her four-year-old adopted child pleaded to the NPA to tell her where she could find the body of her husband, if he is really already dead.

Nepomuceno said that with the abduction of Tandoc, the NPA violated the international agreement of hiring minors and even involving them in the kidnapping. He said the NPA gave the .45-caliber of Tandoc to a minor after the abduction.

"If they can't give us an indication that Tandoc is dead, it means the NPAs are liars and Ka Roger Rosal is an incompetent leader because he does not know what his subordinates are doing," said Nepomuceno.

In Zambales, two suspected New People's Army rebels were killed in a clash with Army soldiers on Friday. Two other rebels and two soldiers from the 24th Infantry Battalion were also wounded in the 20-minute encounter that broke out at past 6 a.m. in Masinloc town, according to Lt. Col. Preme Monta, information officer of the Army's Northern Luzon Command. Monta did not identify slain rebels and other casualties in the firefight. He said about 40 NPA rebels engaged soldiers and Zambales policemen in the firefight in Barangay Sta. Rita, Masinloc. Government troops reported seizing a shotgun and a 22 cal. at the encounter site.

Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

ROUNDUP

Bishop to look into killings

DAVAO CITY—Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla said he was willing to look into the city's unsolved vigilante-related killings this year that have reached 76. He said the killings have become very alarming and there was no way to stop this but through a dialogue with members of the vigilante group Davao Death Squad (DDS), which he was willing to talk with. Capalla assured the DDS members that he would keep their identities confidential. He said it was important to know the background of these vigilante members and their motives in killing suspected criminals, mostly those involved in illegal drugs. The bishop said no one has the right to just condemn the vigilantes, citing the Church's teaching of forgiveness and reconciliation. "We are only human and we have no reason that we can't forgive," he said.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Caroling by cops banned

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Caroling in security agencies and other business firms, requesting for donations and gifts for their Christmas parties and selling raffle tickets and other fund-raising activities have been banned in the Calabarzon area. Regional police director Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal last week said the order aims to maintaining "the dignity of the police as a professional public servant and dispelling the common notion that members of the Philippine National Police are using their position for personal gains." He said the order came from PNP chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. to curb graft and corrupt practices among police ranks. Erring police officials would be subjected to administrative sanctions, he warned.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Typhoid kills 1, downs 50

MALILIPOT, Albay—A typhoid fever outbreak in an island village of this town has killed its barangay captain and sent at least 50 villagers to a hospital in Tabaco City since Nov. 20. Dr. Veronica Madulid, Albay Health Office chief, said Atilano Luminares of Sitio Santicon, Barangay Salvacion here was declared dead at the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital (BRTTH) in Legazpi City. The patients, aged 6 months to 60 years old, showed symptoms of typhoid fever like on-and-off fever, diarrhea and vomiting. Mayor Herminio Bitara has ordered the health unit to conduct water test in the village where the outbreak hit and assist all the patients by providing them with all the needed medicines. The town council here has passed a resolution declaring the town under state of calamity.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cop officer shot dead

LEMERY, Batangas—A police officer was shot and killed after visiting a friend in this town. SPO4 Ronilo Dimaunahan, 40, was killed on the spot when two unidentified armed men aboard a motorcycle shot him several times while he was on his way home from Barangay Maguihan of this town at 4 p.m., Nov. 25. Dimaunahan, who was chief of Bauan police intelligence division, had been getting threats from drug rings whose pushers he was able to put in jail. Lemery police said the victim was shot while inside his owner-type jeep. After shooting Dimaunahan, one of the suspects took his firearms and both fled to an unknown direction.

Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

P20M fire damage

MATNOG, Sorsogon—A fire razed the Matnog commercial center here at 10 p.m., Monday, burning down some 25 business stalls and seven residential houses. A police report said the fire, which lasted more than two hours and caused an estimated P20-million damage, was believed to have originated from the residence of one Nida Frencillo, and caused by a burning candle left unattended. It was put out by the Bureau of Fire Protection units from the municipalities of Irosin, Bulan, Gubat and Sorsogon City, while the Matnog police provided security in the area. No casualty was reported.

Emir Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Smashup hurts 6

LUCENA CITY—The "killer spot" along the Maharlika Highway here, yesterday posted its second incident of multiple-vehicle smashup for November that left six people injured, two of them in serious condition. Police said at round 8 a.m. yesterday, a ten-wheeler cargo truck driven by Alberto Anora, of Abuyog, Leyte, was traversing the descending area of the highway towards the poblacion when it bumped the passenger jeepney traveling ahead. Due to the fast speed, the cargo truck also hit seven more vehicles that included three more passenger jeepneys, two mini dump trucks, a Hyundai Grace van and a Mitsubishi Lancer before it finally stopped after hitting a concrete Meralco post and a residential house along the side of the road. The driver of the first passenger jeepney and the cargo truck helper were both in critical condition and were confined at the nearby Lucena United Doctors Hospital. All vehicles suffered heavy damages, according to the report. Initial police investigation revealed that the cargo truck lost its brakes. Two weeks ago at least 35 persons, mostly students, were also injured when another cargo vehicle lost its brakes and rammed through three passenger jeeps.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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GMA plays Santa to 150 squatters

LUCENA CITY—For at least 150 squatter families in this city, the occasion was a Christmas dream that finally came true.

On Thursday, President Macapagal-Arroyo distributed at least 150 Certificates of Entitlement for Lot Allocation to the first batch of urban poor that have long been residing in two parcels of government-owned land in the outskirts of the city.

The awarding coincided with the Farmers Forum on Agrarian Reform held Thursday in Centro Pastoral Auditorium in Barangay Isabang.

At least 100 of the lucky informal settlers were members of about 700 families living alongside the vast empty strip of the unused runway in Barangay Ibabang Iyam, some for as long as 30 years.

The other 50 recipients were members of around 200 families who have been occupying the one-hectare piece of land owned by the Philippine National Railways in Barangay Gulang-Gulang.

Ms Macapagal called on the people to continue to support her government.

Naty Veloso, president of United Landing Urban Poor Association, a federation of six urban poor associations long residing in the abandoned airport, described the awarding as "a Christmas gift come true."

"With God's help, the lot now finally belongs to us. President Macapagal-Arroyo plays real-life Santa Claus to us," she told reporters.

Quezon Reps. Aleta Suarez, Lynette Punzalan and Rafael Nantes, Lucena City Mayor Ramon Talaga Jr., Quezon Vice Governor Jovito Talabong, police and military officials, and other heads of different government agencies met the President.

Veloso described the ceremony as the starting point of their renewed peace and contentment. "Batch by batch, the other members of the organization will also receive their own certificates. The officers will be the last to receive."

Zoila Ortiz, 81, said she has been residing in the place since 1982.

She said she would just give to her children the 80-square-meter lot granted to her. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Merry Christmas

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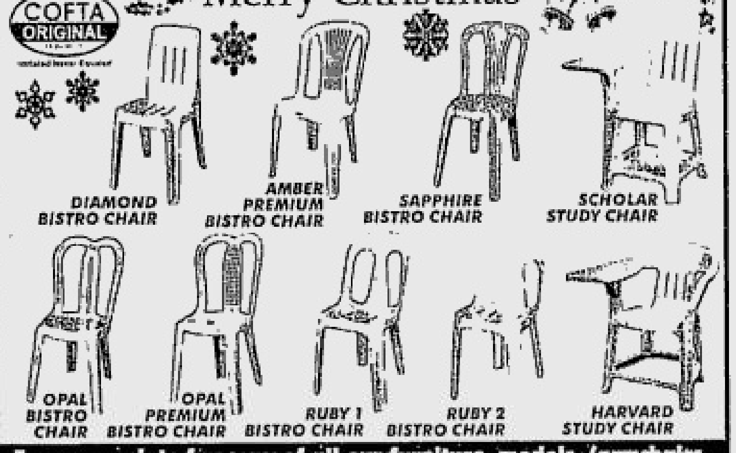

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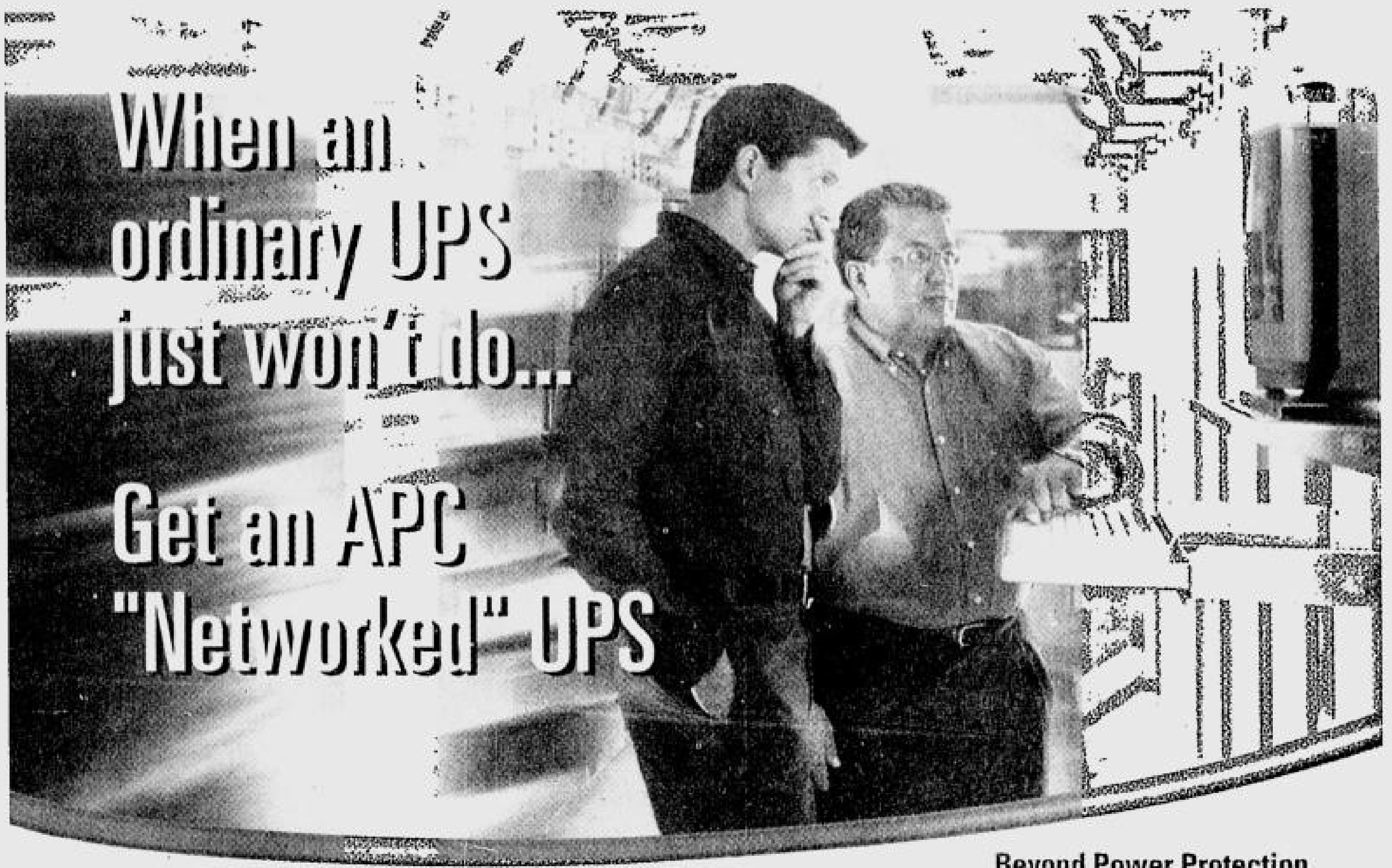

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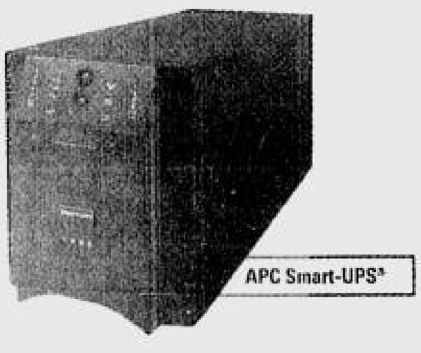

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Roco: Let's change this administration

From page A1

"That is partially aspiration, but I want to be known as the honest president, strong and (who) endeavored to excel for the Filipino and Philippines," Roco said.

On Sunday Roco told the crowd, who waved blue and yellow balloons and hand cutouts, that he expected cheating in the May presidential election. "If they will cheat, we will charge to Malacañang on my command," he said.

Wearing his trademark floral shirt, Roco of Aksyon Demokratiko was flanked by his coalition partners Renato de Villa of Reporma and former Cebu Gov. Emilio "Lito" Osmeña of Promdi.

The three parties have coalesced to form the Alyansa ng Pag-asa (Alliance of Hope).

Roco was also joined on stage by his 87-year-old mother Rosario and wife Sonia.

Despite the lack of glitzy production numbers and show biz personalities, the 9,000-capacity theater was overflowing with Roco's supporters, including delegations from the provinces. A video especially made by movie director Gil Portes was shown, focusing on Roco's credentials.

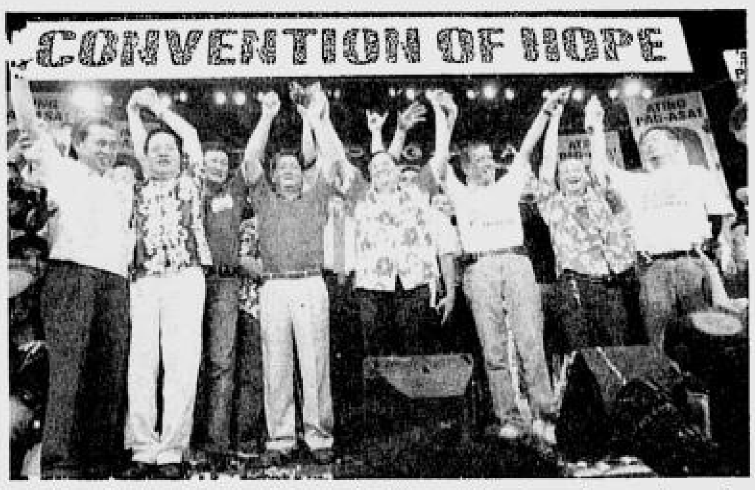
Running mate

Contrary to what was expected, he proclaimed neither his running mate nor his senatorial slate.

He just named the 20 "nominees" for his senatorial lineup led by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who recently bolted the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino; De Villa, Ms Macapagal's former executive secretary, and Misamis Oriental Rep. Oscar Moreno, formerly of the administration party.

Roco said he would announce his slate on Dec. 15, when the filing of certificates of candidacy starts.

Besides De Villa, Biazon and Moreno, the senatorial "nominees" who showed up at the proclamation rally were former Solicitor General Frank Chavez, lawyer Melanio "Batas" Mauricio, broadcaster Jay Sonza, former President Fidel Ramos' daughter Cristy Ramos-Jalasco, athlete Olivia "Bong" Coo and former telecommunications chief Josephine Licauco.



ROCO and political allies Renato de Villa and Lito Osmeña are cheered by thousands of supporters during their convention. ERIK ARAZAS

The other senatorial nominees in attendance were former Pasay Rep. Lorna Verano-Yap, former senior police officer Romeo Maganto, former Samar Rep. Emil Ong, former Rep. Rod Gutang, Lanao del Sur Vice Mayor Dimaporo Ramos and former Sulu Rep. Arden Anni.

The nominees who were mentioned but did not show up were the late Sen. Rene Cayetano's daughter Pia, former Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor, and TV hosts Oscar Orbos and Winnie Monsod.

Roco earlier said Perfecto Yasay, ex-chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission, was on the list of nominees. But his name was not announced yesterday.

On Friday, Roco told the INQUIRER that Biazon, Chavez and Mauricio were sure of being in his lineup.

In an interview yesterday, Maganto said he was sure he would be drafted. He and Chavez brought their own contingents to the proclamation rally.

Cristy Ramos-Jalasco acknowledged that her father would be campaigning for the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats. "I'm grown-up. I have my own mind," said Ramos, who used to chair the Philippine Olympics Committee.

She said the Macapagal administration had failed to solve the problems on peace and order and the economy. To her, Roco is the best candidate who could bring about change.

But while she accepted the nomination, Ramos-Jalasco said she had not decided if she was going to run.

Flower power

Some of Roco's male supporters also came dressed in floral shirts. Huge red and white banners bearing a flower and Roco's name hung on the stage of the "Convention of Hope."

The crowd was mostly in blue and yellow, the color of Roco's Aksyon Demokratiko party. But De Villa's Reporma also mobilized supporters who came in red shirts.

Roco said his hand sign would be the sign of "I love you."

Roco's supporters gave their speeches. The longest was delivered by Osmeña. When it was nearing lunchtime, the emcee cut the speeches short to give way to Roco.

Afterward, Rey Valera sang a special composition. Theater actors Robert Seña and Isay Alvarez also sang a number. Theater actress Pinky Marquez served as one of the emcees.

Actor Bembol Roco, a relative of Roco's, and singer Celeste Legaspi were backstage.

Others seen at the proclamation rally were former Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena, former Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, Naga City Mayor Jess Robredo, Caloocan Rep. Edgar Erice, former Integrated Bar of the Philippines president Arthur Lim and former Commission on Human Rights Chair Nini Quezon Avanceña, daughter of the late president Manuel L. Quezon. *With reports from Dona Pazzibugan and AFP*

Project puts cops out of extortion's way

From page A1

tive source of "legitimate" money for the holidays: lantern-making.

Through the Headquarters Support Service, the PNP sponsored on Thursday a daylong seminar that taught policemen and their immediate families the business of making lanterns and other Christmas decor.

While the project won't yield fast cash like the yearly solicitation practice, Senior Supt. Nicanor Bartolome, HSS deputy director for operations, said it would provide a more lasting source of livelihood for a regular policeman who earns an average of P12,000 monthly.

"We understand the need of men for additional income, especially during Christmas," Director Ricardo de Leon, chief of the directorate for community relations, said.

"And what better way to do this than to help them jump-start their own business and make them and their families self-reliant?"

A total of 150 officers, plus their spouses and other family members, showed up at the Multi-Purpose Hall in Camp Crame to learn the craft straight from the experts. Going by the sheer volume of registrants, the PNP appeared to have succeeded in dragging a handful of men out of "holiday extortion's way."

Family enterprise

Participants represented almost all of the PNP's support services, such as the Legal Support Service, Health Service, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Intelligence Group, Traffic Management Group, Crime Laboratory and the HSS or base police.

Bartolome said the PNP included family members in the hope that the pilot project would someday become a "family enterprise" for many of its personnel.

"Our vision is to make this humble project not only an additional source of livelihood but also the start of a business that would later become a tradition that would support even future generations," he said.

To ensure that the project would not be run-of-the-mill, the PNP tapped several "experts" to handle sessions on making Chrismas lanterns out of coconut, bamboo, straw and *capiz* shells.

Classes on how to make scented candles, dried flower arrangements, and cross-stitch decor featuring Yuletide symbols, such as the manger (or *belen*) and angels were handled by three members of the HSS Women Police Office. Bartolome said the trainers had been making these items for a living for several years now.

Old-timers from Valenzuela town and in Pampanga were invited to teach the art of making colorful lanterns, Filipino-style, the kind that turns the simplest of homes into instant attractions.

Free materials

After lectures that touched briefly on theories and techniques, participants got the chance to create their own decor using materials provided for free by the PNP. They were also free to bring home their creations so they could teach the craft to other members of the family.

A key part of the seminar dealt with the craft's lucrative business opportunities. Trainers provided tips on where to buy the cheapest but most attractive material, say, for a cross-stitch, how to choose the sturdiest framework for a lantern, or how to tell if a particular kind of wax for a scented candle would melt as easily as ice cream.

All this, Bartolome said, was aimed at encouraging participants to realize that, more than a seasonal fetish, Christmas decor can be as profitable as the old "*lechon manok*" craze or the current parlor business fad. And who knows? Cops may soon drive the veterans out of business.

For a start, Bartolome says officers may display their creations right in Camp Crame and decorate their respective offices. Soon they may sell the stuff to police stations all over the country. If that happens, not only would the PNP have a battalion of lantern-makers but also an army of buyers.

"These things are all possibilities," he says. "We simply want our men to realize that there are a myriad of opportunities in this endeavor."

Considering the relative success of the pilot project, Bartolome is confident that no more policemen would go through the humiliating "tradition" of going from one house to another, soliciting cash and other forms of gifts on the pretext of a coming PNP Christmas party.

For a change, they might even start playing Santa—stopping by your neighborhood and leaving a personal creation, a miniature lantern, right on your doorstep.

AFPSLAI @ 31: Members, our Strength; Service, our Commitment

31st Anniversary

December 1, 2003, 9:00 a.m.
Bulwagang Hen Arturo T Enrile (AFP Theater and Multi-Purpose Hall)
Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City

Republic of the Philippines
Department of National Defense
General Headquarters
Armed Forces of the Philippines
Office of the Chief of Staff

MESSAGE

It gives me much pleasure to express my warmest felicitations to the officers, employees and members of the Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association, Incorporated on the occassion of your 31st Anniversary.

As a joint enterprise among uniformed personnel, AFPSLAI has proven its commitment to the welfare of its clientele-beneficiaries. Recently, borrowing costs have been reduced while benefits have been increased. This has given AFPSLAI members greater financial flexibility in responding to domestic issues that impact significantly in the performance of their mission.

I am pleased to note that your anniversary theme, "Members-our strength, Service- our commitment," reaffirms your commitment to pursue the aforementioned innovations designed to enhance AFPSLAI's position as a credible service provider to the AFP.

Indeed, AFPSLAI is more than a financial institution. It is not merely a standby credit facility that enables soldiers and policemen to manage unforseen escalations in their personal spending. It is a strong partnership established among all uniformed personnel in the course of their collective duty to protect the rights and welfare of the Filipino people.

Once again, congratulations and carry on!

GEN NARCISO L ABAYA AFP
Chief of Staff
Armed Forces of the Philippines

Armed Forces and Police Savings & Loan Association, Inc.
(Authorized by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)
EDSA cor Col B. Serrano Rd., Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City

MESSAGE

It is another momentous year for the Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association, Inc (AFPSLAI) as we celebrate our 31st year. From its humble beginnings in 1972, AFPSLAI has transformed into a leader in the non-stock savings and loan industry today.

All through these years we are glad with our members' undivided loyalty and patronage. We look forward to continuously providing them with more enhanced products and services to meet their changing needs as well as fulfill our commitment of sharing our blessings through socio-civic projects nationwide.

Let me take this opportunity, in behalf of management and the workforce of AFPSLAI to give our wholehearted gratitude to all military and police personnel and their dependents for their unwavering support.

And to the men and women of the Association, my deepest thanks and appreciation for your dedicated service to the organization. Our experience and accomplishments will steer us through the years ahead. Rest assured all the plans we have for AFPSLAI are geared towards a more stable and relevant organization, worthy of respect to those men and women we serve.

Mabuhay ang AFPSLAI!

P/DIR RUFINO G IBAY JR (Ret)
President & CEO

Corporate Milestones

FINANCIAL & OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Total assets as of end-September 2003 aggregated P32.7B, a growth of P3.5B or 12% from the year-end December 2002 figure of P29.2B.
- Total loans released in September 2003 reached P1.89B higher by P95.9M or 5% than the August 2003 loan production of P1.79B.
- As of end-September 2003, total membership stood at 399,591 or a net addition of 1,450 within the year. Membership base is comprised mainly of the AFP, PNP, BJMP, BFP, Retired/Civilian employees and Associate members.

MAJOR UNDERTAKING AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Enhancement of existing products and services:
  - a series of reduction of interest rate for salary loan was implemented last March and July 2003, respectively;
  - a reduction of interest rate for emergency loan was implemented in July 2003;
  - streamlining of salary loan requirements (i.e. reduction of loan requirements, non-requirement of co-maker, etc.);
- P150M Salary loan rebates released in October 2003 for members whose payments were regular or updated from January to December 2002.
- Completion/inauguration of the following:
  - Board of Trustees/Audio-Video Room - June 2003;
  - The new Cagayan de Oro Branch Office - April 4, 2003;
  - The new Zamboanga Branch Office - June 9, 2003;
  - New Mactan Extension Office (under Cebu Branch) - June 11, 2003;
- Kick-off ceremony of the livelihood/entrepreneur training program for members' dependents in coordination with Technological Livelihood and Resource Center at Camp Capinpin, Tanay on November 22, 2003;
- Donations to various AFP and PNP units.
- Three (3) ambulances for the hospitals of Philippine Army, Philippine Air Force and Philippine Navy;
- Construction of the covered court for Camp Bagong Diwa, Bicutan, Taguig
- Brand new microcomputer sets to HSS and Western Police District, PNP
- Sponsorship of collegiate education of 69 dependents of AFPSLAI members through the AFPSLAI Scholarship Program. The scholarship grant covers full matriculation/tuition fees, monthly stipend of P3,000.00 and a book allowance of P2,000.00 per semester;
- Outreach Program benefitting station hospitals under the area of responsibility of 18 branch offices all over the country.

Celebration Highlights

Search for Successful Member-Entreprenuer of the Year Award

P/SInsp Wilfredo P Estrella PNP
First Prize Winner

MSgt Feliciano G Rebuca Jr (Ret)
Second Prize Winner

SPO2 Gladius R Sarne PNP
Third Prize Winner

The Most Promising Entrepreneur

SPO4 Romeo V Cayabyab PNP

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Interior and Local Government
National Police Commission
General Headquarters
Philippine National Police
Camp Crame, Quezon City

MESSAGE

I would like to extend my warmest greetings to the Armed Forces and Police savings and Loan Association on your 31st Anniversary.

Since its founding 31 years ago, AFPSLAI has been serving members of the armed forces and the police with utmost dedication and efficiency.

Indeed, this institution has been a part and parcel of the lives of our men and women in uniform for so long that it has become practically synonymous with the promotion of their welfare.

"We Are Where Our Members Are" is the motto of AFPSLAI. This is as it should be, since its reason for being is to be able to provide financial assistance to those who are most in need.

I wish you all the best as you commemorate another year of outstanding service to the military and police organizations in the country.

Congratulations and more power!

HERMOGENES E EBDANE JR.
Police Director
Chief, Philippine National Police

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

MESSAGE

Congratulations on your 31st Anniversary!

You have lived up to the challenge of safeguarding and multiplying the resources entrusted to you by the defenders of our nation. You in AFPSLAI have helped improve the welfare and quality of life of your members and their families.

May you continue to grow stronger and better. Your success is also the success of those who have entrusted their futures to you. Your success is also the success of our nation.

Rest assured of my personal support in assuring your success.

MELITO S SALAZAR JR
Member, Monetary Board

BSP chief blamed for peso fall

From page A1

go down hard on speculators, Cuisia said.

After Poe announced on Wednesday that he was running in the presidential elections next May, the peso plunged to an intraday record low of 55.85 to the dollar the following day. The peso, however, ended that day at 55.69 to the dollar—still a record closing low. On Friday, it slid further to 55.73.

Some traders and analysts said they expected the peso to breach the 56 level in the coming weeks.

Buenaventura, however, said the peso would likely stabilize at 55 to the dollar this month because of expected huge inflow of dollar remittances from overseas Filipino workers. *(See story in Business, page B8)*.

Cuisia's allegations incensed Buenaventura. "We have penalized a lot speculators, but I don't have to tell him who and how much we levied against them in penalties," the BSP governor said.

Buenaventura also questioned the competence of Cuisia in evaluating BSP policies, describing as "uneventful" his detractor's three-year stint as central bank governor.

Buenaventura, who assumed the top BSP post during the Estrada administration, said Cuisia "should just stick to selling insurance or wait for me to step down so he could campaign to take over my seat."

Cuisia chairs Philamlife, the country's biggest insurance firm and local subsidiary of the American insurance giant AIG.

Sergio Ortiz Luis Jr., president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said it was very easy to manipulate the currency market because of the small volume involved each day at the Philippine Dealing System.

"A deal involving $5 or $10 million between two companies is enough to dictate the level of the peso," Luis said.

He noted that the impact of political events and issues on the currency and stock markets had been "exaggerated," considering that only people from the A and B classes participate in these markets. *With a report from AFP*

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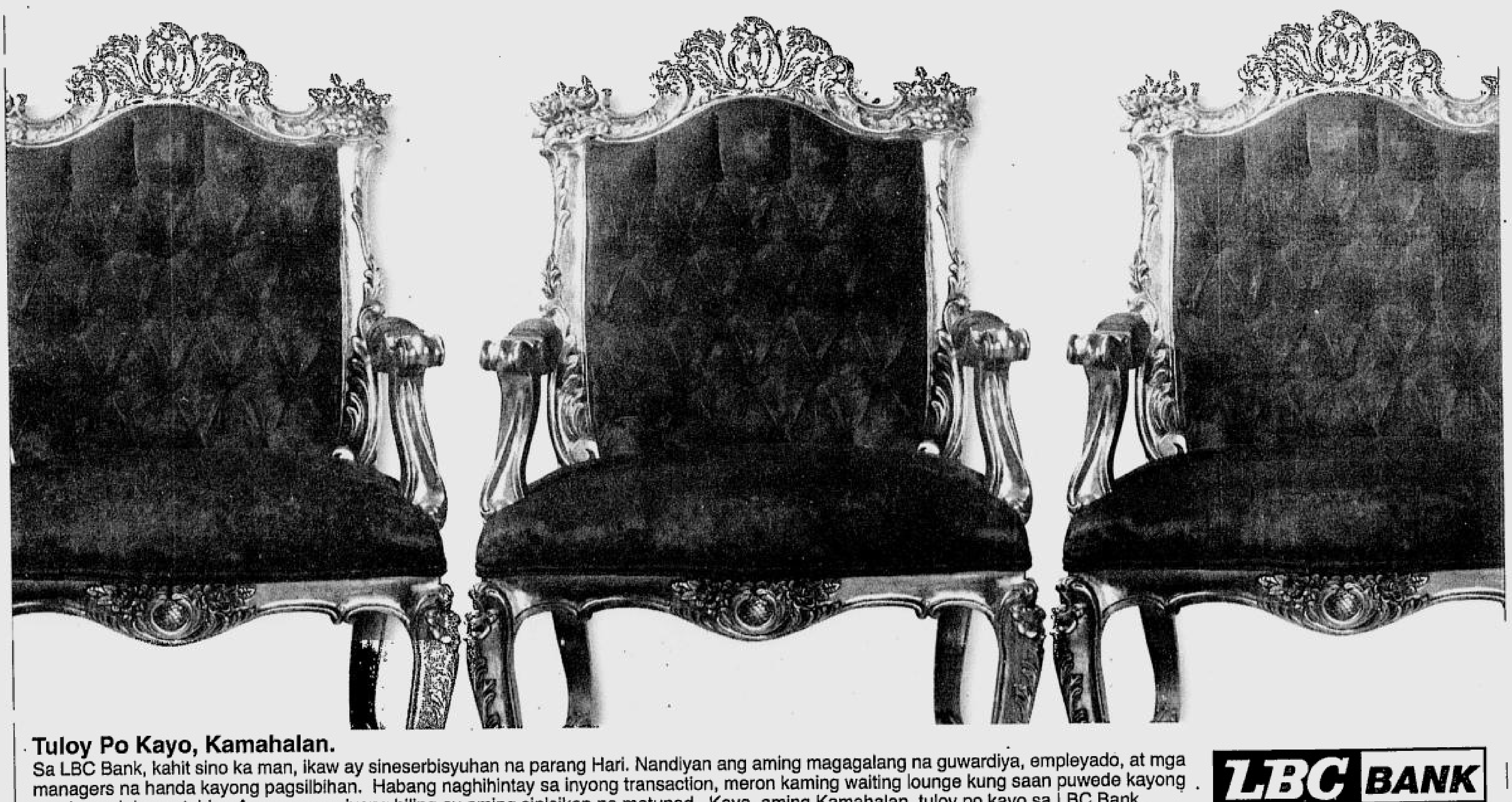

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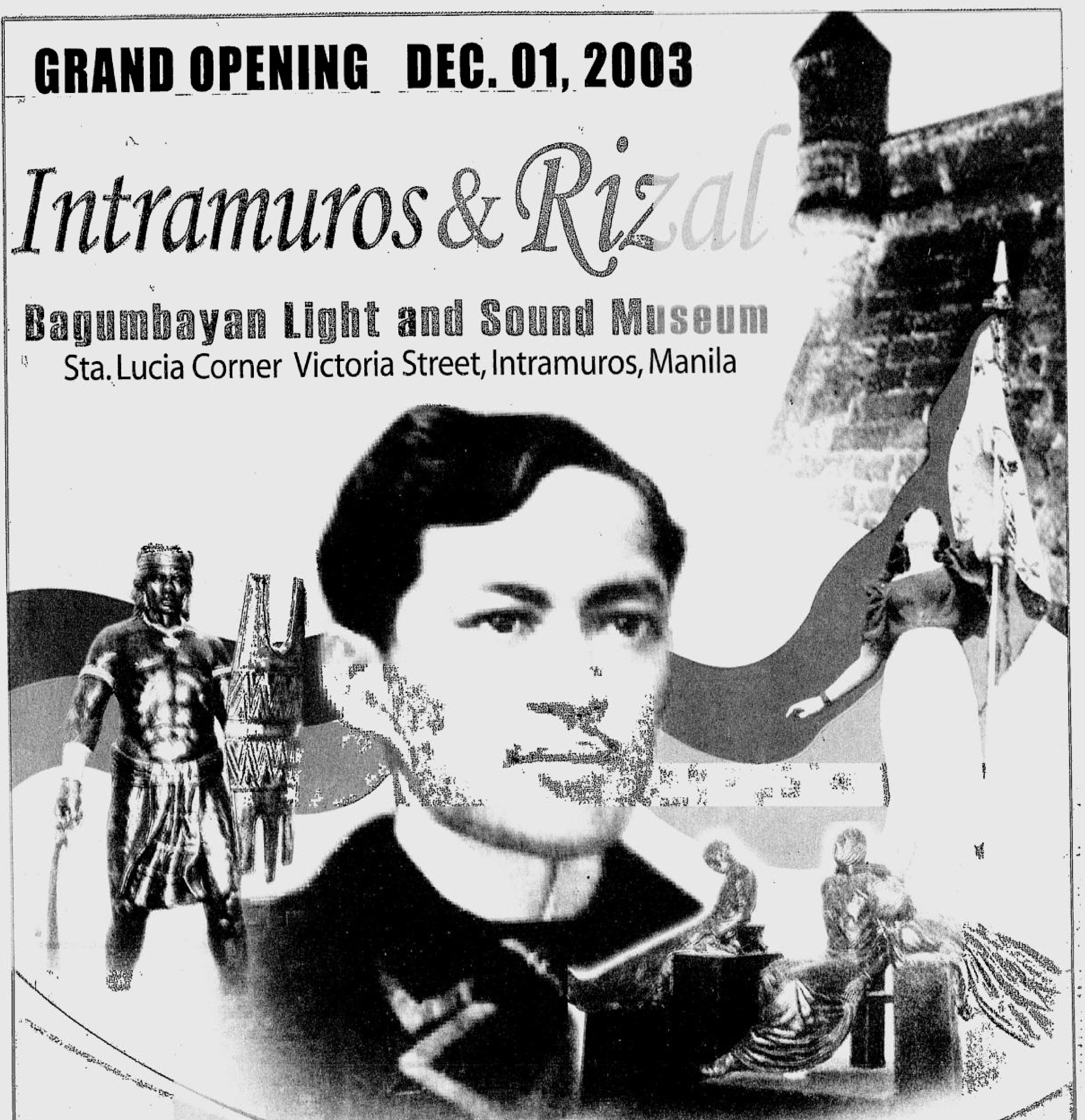

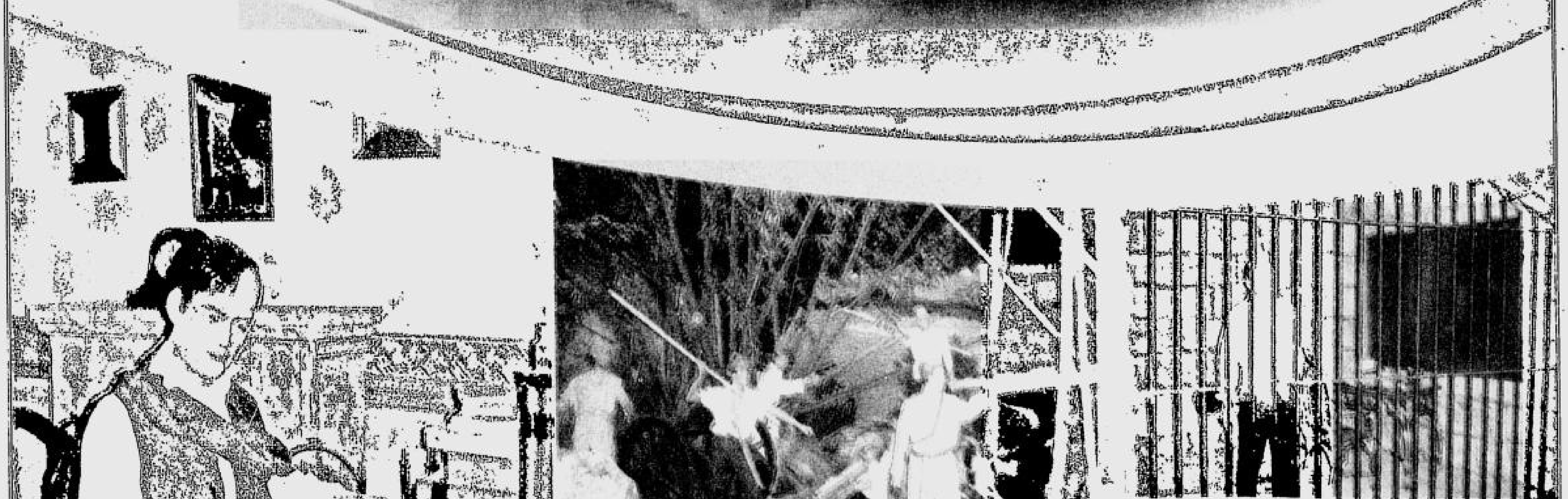

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METROBRIEFS

Brawl in San Andres

TWO YOUNG men who only wanted to stop a fight were killed during a brawl in San Andres Bukid, Manila. Dennis Sederos, 18, of Tenorio corner Dagonoy streets, San Andres, and an unidentified teenage man, yesterday woke up to the sound of fighting in the street, said SPO1 Benito Cabatbat. The two were trying to pacify the fighting men, when an armed unidentified man opened fire on the group at around 3 a.m., hitting both victims. *Tarra Quismundo*

Killing in Happy Land

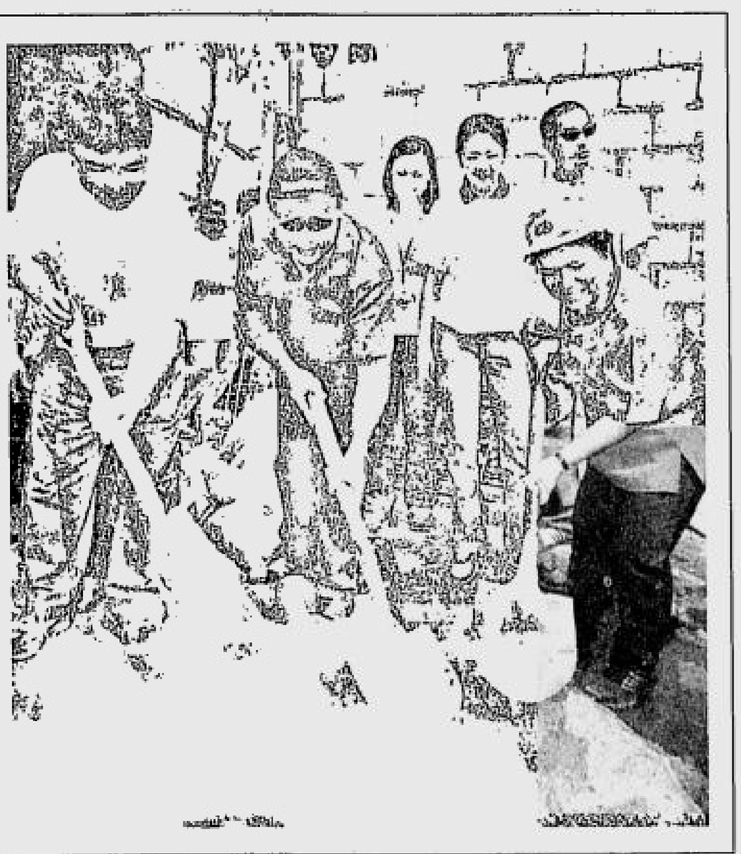
VENDOR Raul Granada, 46, yesterday was shot and killed after he allegedly accused Pablo Otero Jr. of stealing. Police said Otero, a resident of Happy Land, Tondo, got upset when Granada confronted him over the alleged thefts in their neighborhood. At around 1 a.m. yesterday, Otero and two other men cornered Granada at the neighborhood basketball court and shot the victim in the chest. *Tarra Quismundo*

AIM leadership talk

DR. FEDERICO M. Macaranas, dean of the Asian Institute of Management's Center for Development Management is scheduled to talk on the topic "Exploring the Heart of Servant Leadership" during the three-day multi-sectoral leadership conference which begins today at the AIM Conference Center in Makati City. The conference will run until Dec. 3. For details, please contact the IMDM secretariat at 753-2006.

Bookfair in Megamall

"THE CHRISTMAS Remainders Bookfair 2003" will be held Dec. 4 to 10 at the Activity Area, on the 2nd Level of Building A, SM Megamall, Edsa, Mandaluyong City. The seven-day event is organized by Primetrade Asia, Inc. For inquiries, call Primetrade at 896-0661 and 896-0682.



HOUSES FOR THE HOMELESS Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman, Rep. Jack Duavit and Hector Jaraza of the McDonalds fastfood chain get down to the business of building 24 houses for the homeless in Taytay, Rizal.

RUDY ESPERAS

LLDA workers slam agency honcho for hitting campaign trail too soon

THE HEAD of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) is under fire allegedly for failing to do his job because he is busy campaigning for President Macapagal-Arroyo.

LLDA employees on Thursday stormed out of their offices and demanded the resignation of LLDA General Manager Calixto Cataquiz.

The employees said Cataquiz has been acting as Ms Macapagal's de facto campaign manager in Laguna, Quezon, Rizal and parts of Metro Manila.

But during an interview, Cataquiz denied the charges, saying that he is "not openly" campaigning for the President.

He explained that when he visits towns and municipalities around the lake in the course of his job, "the employees perceive me to be campaigning."

Ed Canawin, spokesperson of the Concerned Employees of the Laguna Development Authority, said that Cataquiz has also been using LLDA resources in the campaign.

Canawin said the LLDA chief also proposed to print 100,000 GMA calendars to be given out next year.

Cataquiz, former mayor of San Pedro, Laguna, explained that the GMA calendars were nothing more than promotional materials for the agency.

"There is no malice here," he said. "We only wanted to broadcast what the agency has been doing." *Luige del Puerto*

Poor pay drives out best and brightest, say gov't scientists

By Margaux Ortiz

THE LACK of benefits and incentives for engineers and scientists working for the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) may cause the government's best and brightest to look for greener pastures abroad or in private companies, according to a science research specialist.

Dr. Araceli Monsada, a material scientist and president of the Association of Employees in Scientific Endeavor, said that DOST employees, most of whom are very talented scientists and experts, are already tired of waiting for the full implementation of Republic Act 8439, or the Magna Carta for scientists, engineers, researchers and related science and technology personnel.

Monsada said the Magna Carta, which was enacted in 1997 and implemented in 1998, promised to provide incentives and benefits that would "attract and keep the best and the brightest among the country's science and technology practitioners."

"But until now, the Magna Carta is still unfunded," Monsada said. "The situation is causing demoralization and brain drain among the research and development institute employees."

Monsada explained that the DOST needs P531 million a year to fund the Magna Carta.

Apart from the subsistence allowance and other benefits, the Magna Carta would also provide for the hazard pay of researchers exposed to dangerous elements like chemicals, microorganisms and radiation. Then there is the longevity pay which, Monsada said, would encourage scientists to stay and work in the government.

But Monsada said that because there is presently no budget appropriation for the Magna Carta, the 21 DOST agencies are compelled to use their own savings to fund the law.

"With this scheme, the department's smaller agencies are favored because they have lesser expenses, while the bigger agencies which generate most of the accomplishments suffer adversely," Monsada lamented.

Monsada, who works at the Industrial Technology Development Institute (ITDI) in Taguig, said depending solely on the agency's own savings also has other adverse effects.

"At the ITDI for example, we are forced to postpone projects and forgo important trainings so we could cut down on our expenses," Monsada said. "Ultimately, our work is affected."

The scientist also stressed that 50 well-trained experts have already left ITDI since 2000 because of lack of proper remuneration.

"Most of the people who left really excelled in their respective fields and were even trained abroad," she said. "They did not want to leave the government, but they were left with no choice."

She said that the DOST employees have held nine successive rallies at the main office in Bicutan to show their indignation at the "complacency and indifference of the DOST management."

NCMH property sale leaves doctors worrying about patients

By Luige del Puerto

THE PROPERTY where the National Center for Mental Health sits is up for sale, and concerned NCMH doctors and personnel are worried about their patients.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Health have decided to sell the property to raise funds with which to build new hospitals and support other DSWD programs.

But NCMH doctors and personnel are strongly opposing the sale, saying that the patients will greatly suffer when they are transferred to other regional centers still to be put up.

According to Dr. Anthony Estrada, president of NCMH's Physicians Association, Inc., the proposed regional mental health centers may not have sufficient equipment or capable staff to treat patients.

Fr. Robert Reyes on Thursday held a mass in support of the mental center staff, and called on Mandaluyong Mayor Abalos and DSWD Secretary Dinky Soliman to keep off the property.

"We are urging Ms Soliman to stop the sale," Reyes said. "There are things more important than money."

Reyes said the mental center is a "national and cultural heritage" that should be saved, not shelved.

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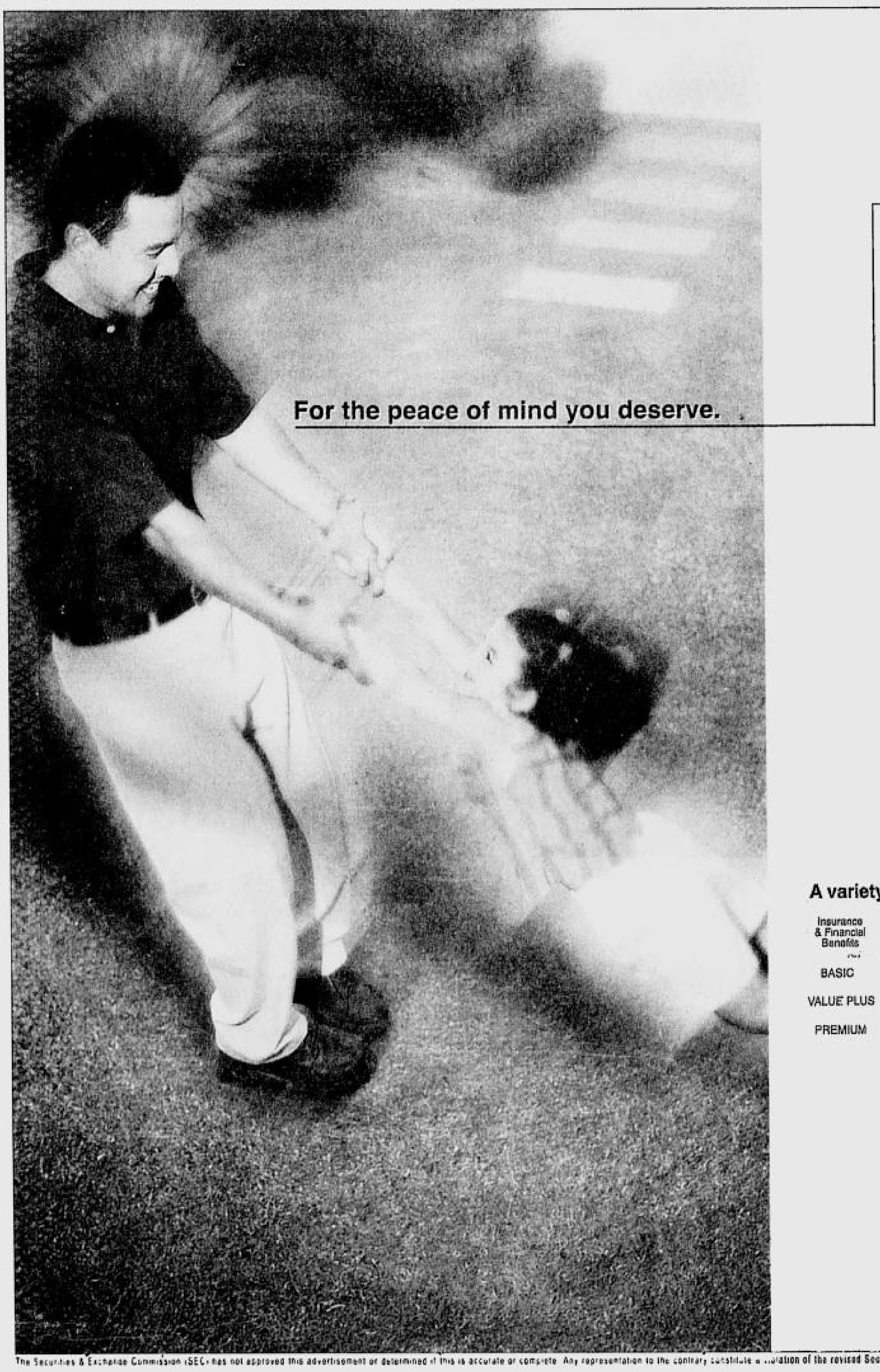
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Metro

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Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

Unit to cater to Chinoys' woes sought

Manila traders speak up

By Tarra Quismundo and Luige del Puerto

IMPROVING the security of Chinese Filipinos could start with breaking through the language barrier.

This was pointed out in a recent command conference of Western Police District (WPD) officials, who invited Filipino-Chinese businessmen to share their views and concerns.

For one, Chinese Filipino Business Club member Felix Tong asked the WPD to set up a Filipino-Chinese Affairs Office to take care of their concerns.

Manned by Chinese-speaking lawmen, the special unit could lead the investigation of crimes involving Chinese Filipinos.

"Because some Filipino-Chinese are not fluent in Tagalog, it's hard for them to express themselves when reporting to the police," Tong said.

He added it could be patterned after the WPD Muslim Affairs Office which attends to concerns of the Islamic community in Manila.

WPD director Pedro Bulaong welcomed the idea. He said such a unit could function as a liaison desk, noting that there are Chinese-speaking policemen in the WPD.

At the Eastern Police District, officials have begun deploying two-man teams to boost security at exclusive schools in the cities of Pasig, Mandaluyong and Marikina as well as in San Juan.

At the same time, a strike force of six motorcycle-riding members of the district special weapons and tactics (Swat) team has been put on alert.

The strike force, which is under the direct command of EPD director Rolando Sacramento, acts as a support team to the respective Swat units of each locality.

GIFT OF SMILE

Streetchildren pose for the camera during the Christmas party organized by the Philippine Daily Inquirer led by Ms Sandy Prieto Romualdez (in green) at the PDI car park in Makati City. Inset shows the children dancing the "Otso-otso."

EUGENE ARANETA

Fernando asserts MMDA rule

By Margaux Ortiz

THE WAR of words between the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the Parañaque City government rang out again over the weekend with Chairman Bayani Fernando warning Mayor Joey Marquez that a Metro Manila Council resolution had more weight than a city ordinance.

Fernando was referring to a Council resolution, which Marquez himself signed, that bans illegal vending on the streets and sidewalks.

It was directed against a Parañaque City ordinance allowing "entrepreneurs" to sell their wares in the streets around the Redemptorist Church through a month-long trade fair.

The MMDA chair pointed out that the council resolution was a "collective decision" of the Metro mayors.

The trade fair was scheduled to begin in the last week of November.

Public warned vs cheap fireworks

THE PHILIPPINE Pyrotechnic Manufacturers and Dealers Association Inc. (PPMDAI), is warning the public on the proliferation of cheap yet illegally produced pyrotechnic materials which could prove hazardous.

PPMDAI president Celso Cruz asked the public not to buy firecrackers made by unlicensed manufacturers to avoid accidental explosions and injuries during the Christmas and New Year revelries.

He pointed out that illegal manufacturers, who operate without licenses and sell cheaper products, lack the technical knowledge in production, storage, sales and distribution.

Hundreds of people are injured annually due to poorly crafted firecrackers made in makeshift workplaces. This has prompted the government to undertake the "Iwas Paputok" campaign.

Apart from endangering the life and limbs of unsuspecting merrymakers, the purchase and use of illegal fireworks affect the lives of legal makers of pyrotechnic materials, Cruz said. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Election talk marks Bonifacio Day rites

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

GAT ANDRES Bonifacio must have longed for his bolo yesterday after the rites commemorating his 140th birth anniversary boiled down to marchers talking of who to vote for in next year's presidential elections.

In a rally at the Mendiola in the afternoon, militant groups led by Bayan and Anakpawis wrapped up their program saying President Macapagal-Arroyo should not hope for their votes in 2004.

"We will not vote for her anymore," said Crispin Beltran, formerly Bayan Muna sectoral representative, now Anakpawis' chair for political concerns.

Beltran said Ms Macapagal was sitting atop an administration which he described as corrupt and tyrannical.

Also, Sen. Panfilo Lacson has been "scratched out" of their list of presidential candidates, Beltran said.

Anakpawis and its 500,000 members nationwide are set to hold a convention in January to "analyze each presidential candidate," according to Beltran.

He said the group would be looking at the platform of former senator and education secretary Raul Roco and action king Fernando Poe Jr.

Beltran said that Anakpawis campaign for whoever the political group collectively deems worthy of its support for 2004.

For the First Quarter Storm Foundation, however, their candidate would be the one who would fight for the public clamor for truth.

President Ramon Sto. Domingo challenged the President to fulfill her promise to establish a truth commission "to review history and expose the wrongs of the past."

Domingo said the truth commission should look into the "crimes against humanity" during the Martial Law years.

Ms Macapagal earlier promised the creation of the commission as part of her call for reconciliation, including with the Marcoses. But in a statement, the group said reconciliation would only be possible if truth is exposed and if the past is given proper closure.

FQS is one of the several organizations of Martial Law victims which comprise the umbrella group Alyansa9.21.

In celebration of the Bonifacio Day, the alliance held a fun run yesterday morning from the Bonifacio Monument in Caloocan City to the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City.

The fun run was dubbed Takbo ng Bayan Tungo sa Katotohanan and was led by Fr. Robert Reyes.

Forest development turning to charcoal

By Tina Santos

FOUR forest stewards are asking the Quezon City Regional Trial Court to order the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) officials to issue a cease and desist order against an alleged illegal logger who is reportedly cutting trees in their areas in Antipolo City.

In a petition for mandamus with prayer for issuance of writ of preliminary mandatory injunction, petitioners Norman Garcia, Nillifin Garcia, Rachel Descalsota and Jesus Garcia, all of Illinois Street, Cubao, Quezon City, said they were holders of Certificates of Stewardship over forest land in Sitio San Joseph, Barangay San Jose Antipolo City.

According to them, they had been developing their respective areas since 1993 by planting plants and trees.

In August 2000, however, a certain Rene Inocencio allegedly began to encroach in their stewardship areas and began cutting down trees which he then made into charcoal.

The petitioners said they reported the activities of Inocensio to the Forest Management Service of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of DENR.

After the petitioners filed their sworn statement on Feb. 15, 2002 before the DENR, CENRO officer Reynaldo Buday recommended the filing of charges against Inocencio.

No charges have been filed against Inocencio, however.

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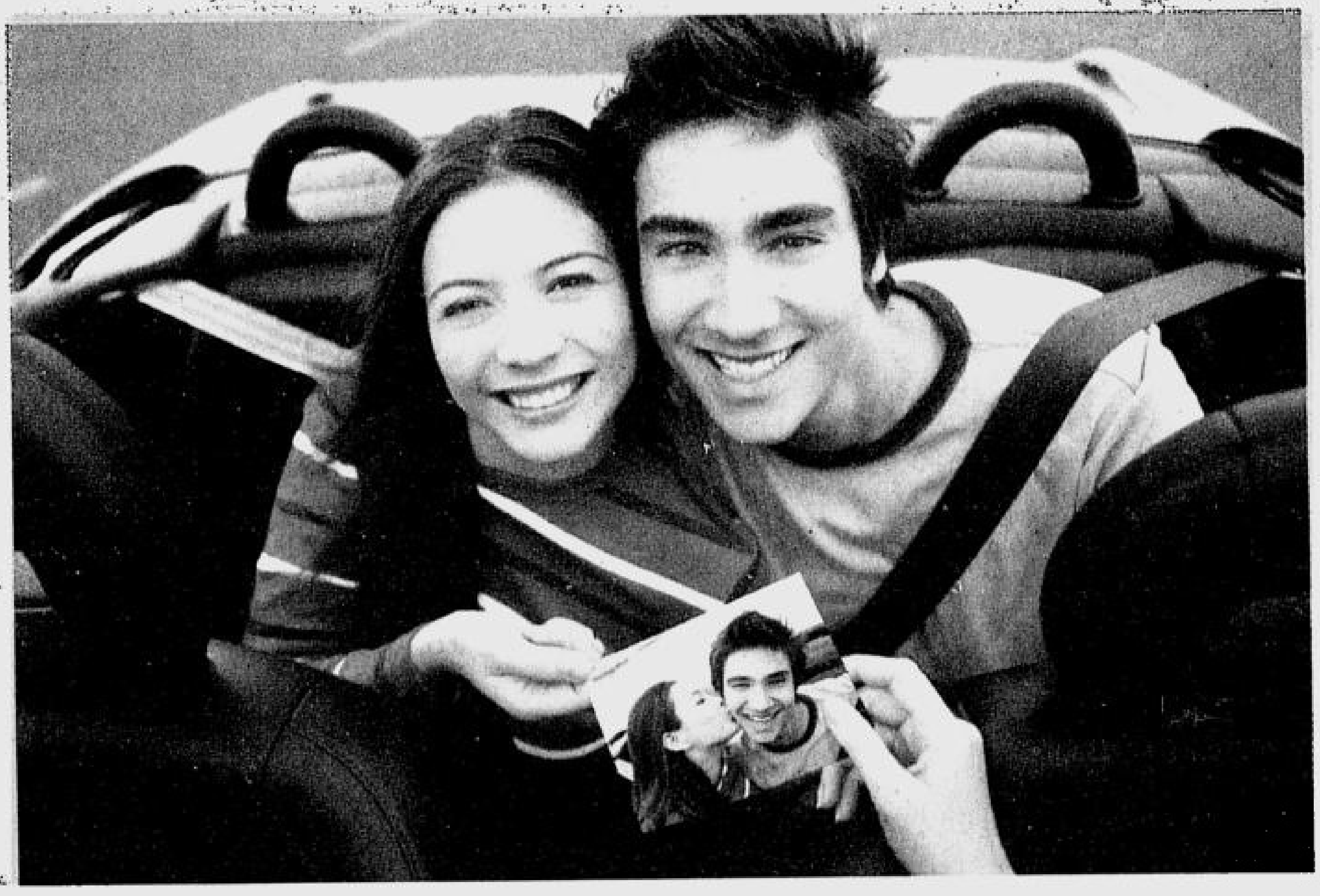

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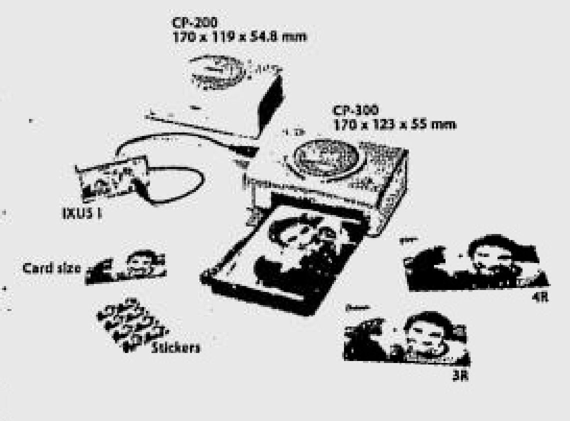

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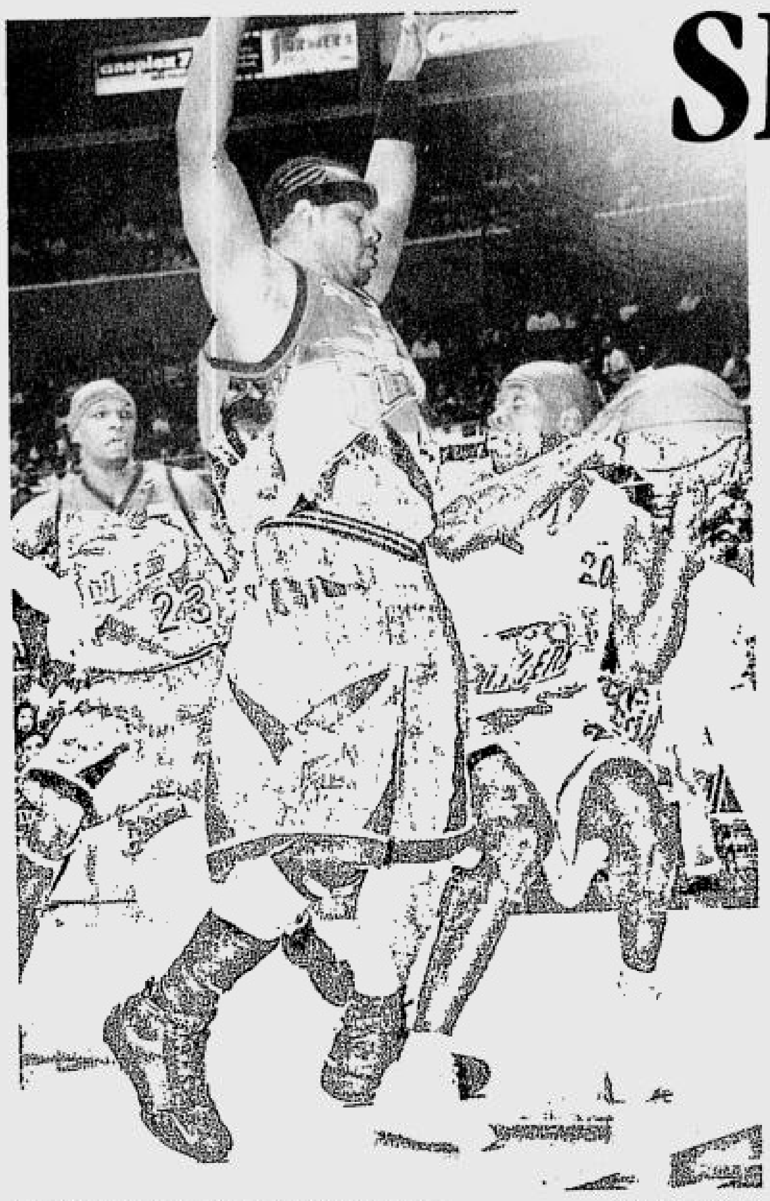

MCLARY tries to shake off Dorian Peña. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

SMB draws first blood

By June Navarro

SAN Miguel Beer showed it can survive even without Kwan Johnson.

The Beermen bucked the absence of Johnson and leaned on Danny Ildefonso down the stretch last night to escape with a thrilling 84-81 victory over the Coca-Cola Tigers in Game 1 of the PBA Reinforced Conference Finals at the Araneta Coliseum.

Ildefonso scored all but four of the Beermen's last 15 points and stole the ball from Coca-Cola import Tee McClary with four seconds remaining as SMB gained headway in the best-of-seven championship series.

Johnson spent the entire fourth period on the bench after hurting his left groin late in the third quarter. Johnson tried to pry the ball loose from a driving Ato Morano when he suddenly lost control, fell and writhed in pain on the floor.

The Beermen, who used only eight players, were enjoying a 63-53 margin when Johnson was pulled out of the game.

Ildefonso, a back-to-back MVP during the Beermen's glory years in 1999 and 2000, pulled his team together, drilling in 11 points to hold off the rallying Tigers at crunchtime.

Rudy Hatfield and McClary joined forces in a 19-6 blitz that razed the Beermen's 14-point lead to one at 80-79 with barely a minute remaining.

But Ildefonso broke the Beer-

SMB/ A27

SEA GAMES

RP bets open up in archery, w'polo

HANOI—The Philippines officially opens its campaign in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here today in archery and water polo.

Archery team manager Ligaya Manalang is confident as the archers, led by Sydney Olympian Jennifer Chan, begin their medal quest at the National Sports Training Center No.1 at 10 a.m. (11 a.m. in Manila).

"Malaki ang pag-asa," said Ms Manalang as she watched her wards go through the event's official practice yesterday. "Contrary to reports we received in Manila, the weather is just right—not too cold but not too hot. If we're lucky, we can win two golds."

It's very cold in the morning, according to Ms Manalang, "but it becomes warmer at around 10 a.m. The wind blows slightly. So hindi masyadong maaapektuhan ang mga bata."

PINOY/ A29

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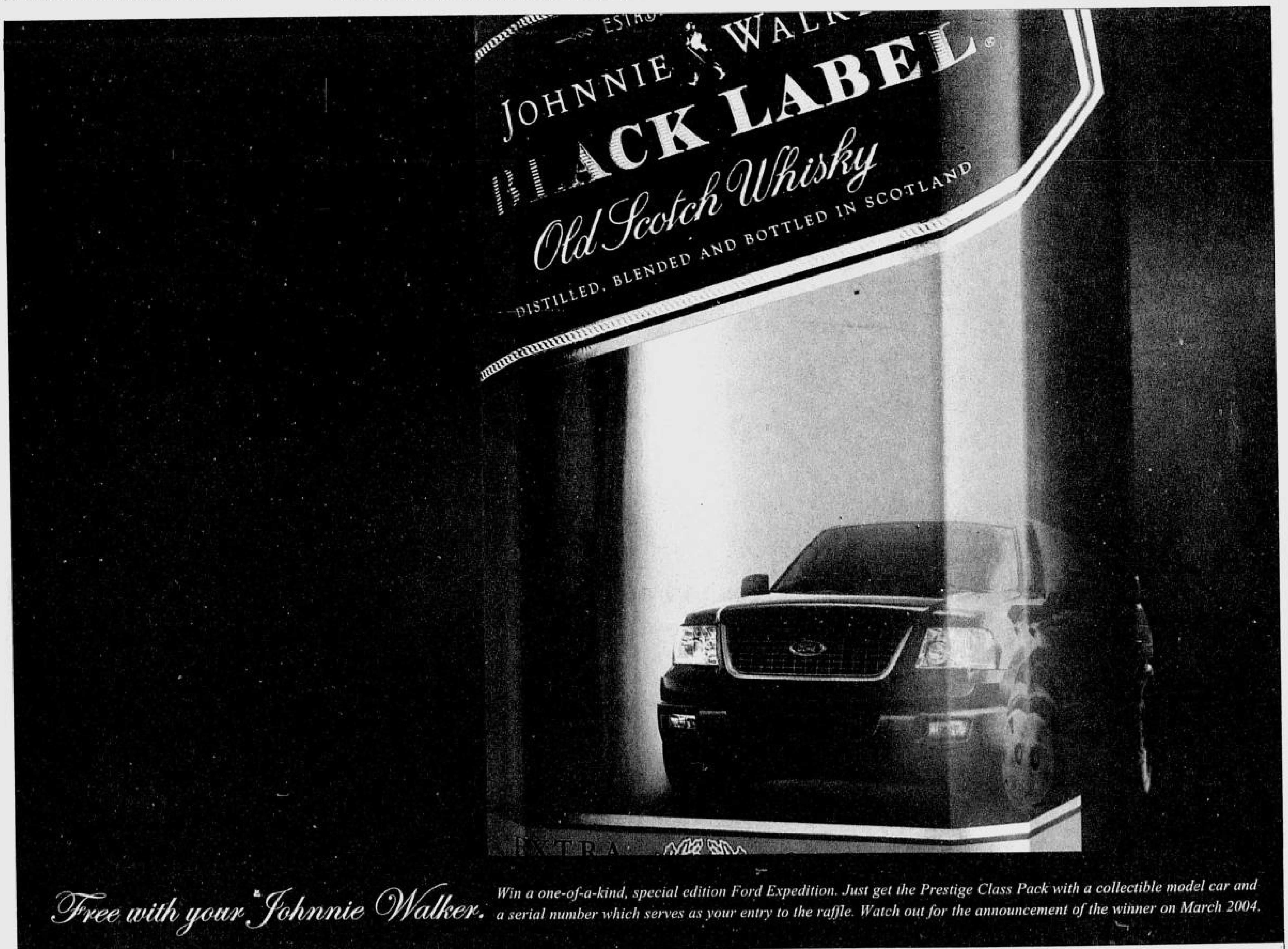

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How to Win? A raffle will be conducted on February 17, 2004 to draw the winning serial number. Raffle will be held during office hours at Diageo Phils., Inc.'s office under the supervision of a DOH-BFAD representative. The winning serial number will immediately be published in major broadsheets. There will only be one winner.
How to redeem the tax-free one-of-a-kind Ford Expedition? Winner is requested to call up Mr. Abel Dolatre, Account and Events Director of Leo Activation, Leo Burnett Manila at telephone number 8848001 loc 225 for the redemption schedule. Winner will shoulder all transportation expenses during the redemption process. Winner must bring the model car and the corresponding plastic base with the winning serial number with valid I.D.s with photos like: driver's license and/or passport. No proxies or representatives of the winner will be entertained. Not convertible to cash. 1st year of vehicle insurance to be shouldered by Diageo Phils., Inc. Prize not claimed within 60 days from the announcement of the winning serial number will be forfeited in favor of Diageo Phils., Inc., with prior approval from DOH-BFAD

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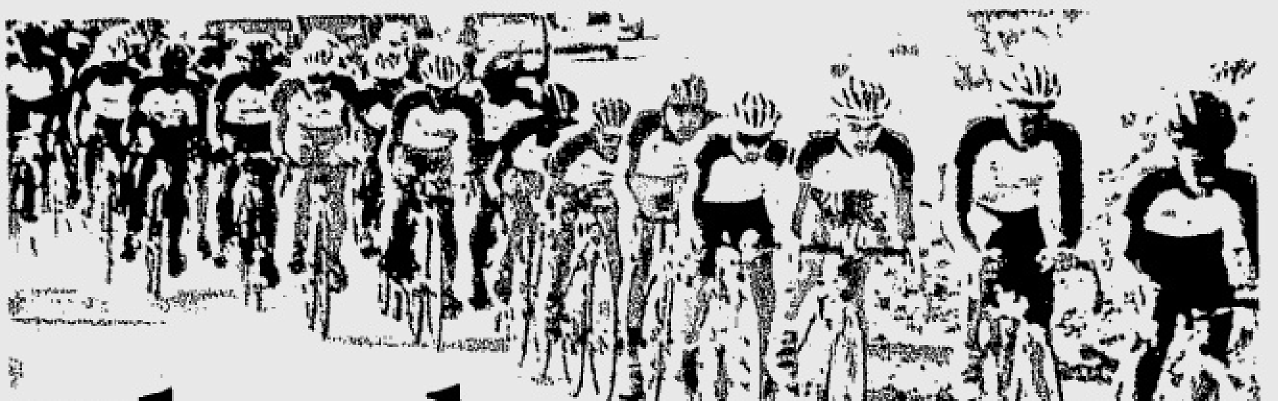

Who else but Primero

PLDT skipper rules Puerto Princesa cycling

PRIMERO lives up to his name.

ROMY HOMILLADA

By June Navarro

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Albert Primero finished first yesterday, turning back the challenge of bosom buddy Bernard Luzon in the criterium to rule the 1st Air21 Puerto Princesa Cycling Challenge.

Protecting a five-second lead after winning the massed start phase of the two-lap race Saturday, Primero never left his eye on Luzon throughout the 120-kilometer circuit race to pocket the P40,000 champion's purse.

Primero, skipper of PLDT-NDD in the Tour Pilipinas, checked in with a big group of riders along with Luzon to secure the overall lead after amassing an aggregate clocking of seven hours, three minutes and 28 seconds.

Luzon took home P30,000 after finishing second overall with a total time of 7:03:33.22, more than five minutes ahead of national team rider Nilo Estayo (7:08:49.79), who copped third and the P25,000 paycheck that went with it.

"*Hindi na ako umatake dahil baka masingitan pa kami ni* Bernard. *Pinilit lang naming protektahan ang lamang naming* (Bernard and I played it safe to protect our lead)," said the 25-year-old Primero, who hails from Nueva Ecija like Luzon.

Asked what he would do with his earnings, Primero said he would purchase a high-end bike, similar to the one used by the national riders, and prepare for the national tryout next January.

Joining the national team has been a cherished dream according to Primero, who captured the final leg of the Tour de Calabarzon in 2002, a four-day race which kicked off the main Tour during the summer.

Luzon, team captain of Patrol 117 said he would spend his winnings to prepare for the national team tryout and the Tour Pilipinas 2003.

Benito Lopez broke away from the pack on the 17th of the 20-lap criterium to rule the second and last stage of the event chiefly sponsored by Air21 and the city of Puerto Princesa through Mayor Edward Hagedorn.

Lopez clocked two hours, 57 minutes and 16.82 seconds, almost three minutes ahead of Benito Stalin (3:00:21.92). Virgilio Quintia Jr (3:00:41.63) and Ronnel Hualda (3:02:25.35) wound up third and fourth, respectively, in the race also backed by FedEx and Mail & More.

Loveless night for RP billiards

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

IMAGINE a ship captain getting seasick on a clear, cloudless day.

Suddenly, it was no longer easy saying nice words for Efren "Bata" Reyes.

On Saturday night, when they re-enacted the scene of his elevation to the Billiards Congress of American Hall of Fame, The Magician ran out of rabbits to pull off his hat.

His biggest night of the year became a concert of agony.

Bata Reyes' championship battle against Mika Immonen for the First Philippine Open 9-Ball title turned into a moment of untruth for the lovable billiards legend.

Reyes lost it 12-13 and, unlike in the past, when he would philosophically shrug off defeat as just another bad night, Bata appeared ready and willing to scold himself.

The odd thing was that he had had his foe, as Anthony Suntay aptly put it, on the ropes.

After Reyes went up 8-4 and later 10-6 in the race-to-13 finals, his fans had expected a stroll in the park for their idol.

***

How and why Reyes failed to rain the killer shots on his visibly discouraged foe will remain a subject of debate.

Maybe his nerves and eyesight have finally taken their toll.

Maybe, as in boxing, it was a case of too many punches, in too many nights, in too many rings.

It was not easy to explain.

The painful truth is that, more than Reyes and his legion of devotees, the biggest losers were local sponsors and backers who had, twice in a row, spent a fortune in a bold bid to showcase Pinoy greatness through homespun billiards wizardry.

Before that Saturday night flop by Bata, his *kumpadre* Django Bustamante last October lost a major championship *mano-a-mano* against Johnny Archer in a nationally televised world-caliber series.

That Django fold-up was forgivable.

***

Last Saturday night was, however, pure and simple a loveless night for Philippine billiards.

Bata's fall against Immonen, whom the local pool legend seemed to have had under his spell in the middle rounds, felt and tasted worse because it also led many to suspend belief on the claim that the Filipino is the finest cue artist in the world.

Yes, Reyes did not go down just like that.

He had, in fact, appeared well-rested, raring and ready to drink from the glory cup.

For the record, Bata Reyes, other than the homecourt edge, had enjoyed a wholesome break while watching Immonen struggle every inch of the way in the semifinals against Django Bustamante.

The Django-Immonen semifinal match, played after Reyes had disposed of tough returnee Dodong Andam, was nerve-wracking, to say the least.

***

Saturday night, in short, held the sweetest promise for Bata.

Why? Well, if it were in bullfighting, Django had perfectly played the old, reliable picador by properly tiring down and setting up Immonen for the kill.

Django had pummeled and bloodied Immonen before presenting him to his *kumpadre* in the grand title duel.

Maybe this ideal set-up had led them to reenact the Hall of Fame rites, a perfect perk for the championship party.

***

With Bata up 10 and 6 and needing only three more racks to complete his loveliest night of the year, fans in countless country nooks had to place advanced orders for drinks.

Immonen essayed a tough safety on the 4-ball but Bata countered with a swoon which, Andy Jao swore, should be preserved in the library of the world's best pool shots.

Bata played great defense, but Immonen was often up to the task.

In fact, the Finnish wonder worker appeared to have stolen the magic from Reyes with a kick-off shot on the 3-ball hidden and lodged deep against the left end rail.

Well, after his unforgettable recovery, when he had had to practically cling and crawl back from an unforgiving cliff, Immonen should've been handed the Steel Nerve trophy together with the $20,000 top money.

Bata went straight with a carom shot for the 9-ball and paid dearly with a foul after the cue ball also fell into the left corner pocket.

There was also a shallow move when he tried an impossible combination on the 2-ball which was lodged against the 6-ball on the right rail. He could have played it safe.

On a most promising night when he could've handily won the crown and gained endless adulation, Bata Reyes was nowhere, by a mile, near the Common Sense shore.

Welcoat whips ICTSI-La Salle

WELCOAT Paints proved too classy for ICTSI-La Salle yesterday, scoring a 72-51 win to further boost its semifinal bid in the PBL Platinum Cup at the San Juan Gym.

Getting another splendid performance from National team mainstay Ervin Sotto, the Paint Masters broke the game wide open in the second quarter en route to their sixth win in seven outings.

Sotto and RP teammates James Yap and Marc Pingris are leaving tomorrow for the Vietnam SEA Games basketball tournament starting Saturday.

The Archers took their seventh loss in nine games.

Earlier, Fash Liquid Detergent escaped with a 54-53 win over Sunkist-UST—thanks to a missed freethrow by Berzon Franco with no time left.

The Liquid Power went scoreless in the last four minutes but Sunkist's Warren de Guzman missed a hurried 3-point shot and Franco just managed a split off Larry Fonacier's foul.

GAMES THURSDAY

1:45 p.m. – Blustar vs ICTSI-La Salle
3:45 p.m. – Viva-FEU vs Sunkist-UST

Scores:

First Game

FASH 54—Alvarez 14, Mercado 11, Fonacier 7, Salangsang 6, Simon 6, Benedicto 5, Gelig 4, Tan 1, Gonzales 0, Tenorio 0, Moore 0.

SUNKIST-UST 53—Villamin 16, Franco 12, Oreta 9, Compton 4, De Guzman 4, Mendoza 3, Vizcarra 2, Hubalde 2, Espiritu 1, Luanzon 0, Santos 0.

Quarters: 9-15; 33-32; 45-40; 54-53.

Second Game

WELCOAT 72—Sotto 16, Patrimonio 8, Wilson 8, Yap 8, Artadi 8, Pingris 6, Tangkay 6, Omolon 4, Cuan 2, Coching 2, Santos 2, Kalaw 0, Celo 0.

ICTSI 51—Aldeguer 10, Gavino 9, Uy 8, Tang 6, Yeo 4, Ramos 4, Cabatu 4, Thoss 2, Magsumbol 2, Aquino 2, Jose 0, Cardona 0.

Quarters: 20-14; 49-20; 62-38; 72-51

Blue tops Caruncho b'minton

TEAM Mr. Quickie-Blue Team won the first Mayor Emiliano Caruncho Jr. Memorial Badminton Cup held last Nov. 22-23 at the Badminton Gold courts in Pasig City.

Pasig Vice Mayor Lorna Bernardo joined members of the Caruncho family in awarding the champion's cup and P60,000 worth of prizes to the winners.

Some 200 players from Pasig and nearby cities and towns saw action in the tournament held in honor of the late mayor to commemorate his contributions to the people of Pasig City.

Among the winners: (Men's) A1—Anthony Samonte and Louie Gil Bonzon (Blue); A2—Mark Anthony Pasicolan, Ramil Mercado (Red); A3—Jimson Consignado, Hanzelle Cruz (Blue); B1—Francis Pasicolan, John Rivera (Green); B2—Dion Guanio, Jay Mariano (Blue); MC1—Ahvel Caro, Bhok Menez (Blue); C2—Jaime Millan, Edmund Tario (Blue); (Ladies) A1—Chiquie Villanueva, Cherry G. (Green); A2—Ivy Silva, Anna Justiniano (Yellow);

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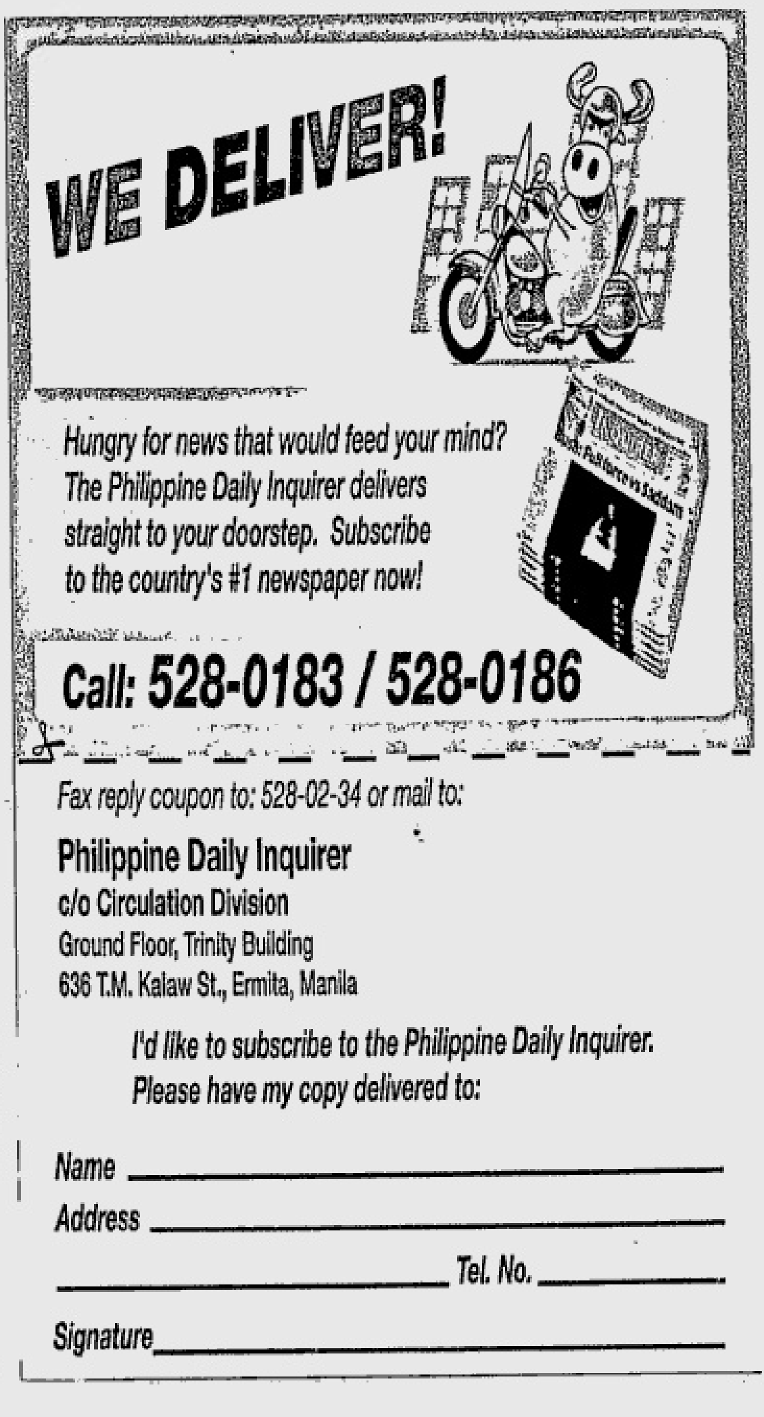

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54th Fil-Am golf under way today

AS the stars of the show take a two-day wait, the duffers in the lower brackets get the ball rolling starting today in the 54th Fil-Am Invitational tournament at the Baguio Country Club and Camp John Hay courses in Baguio.

Teams in flights C, D, E and F in both the Fil and Am divisions, making up half of the field of 147, troop to the two adjacent venues and set off hostilities in the six-day meet once recognized as the world's biggest tournament by the Guinness Book of Records.

Each squad is allowed to field five players with the best four under the Stableford system of scoring counting for the round.

The big championship class battles in the Fil and Am divisions will not start until Wednesday. CAP-Southwoods is seeking a fifth straight Fil division title while Mizuno-DHL is gunning for a third straight Am division trophy.

Thirdy Escano, captain of the Southwoods team, said that with no other course available for practice, they will be spending the next two days fine-tuning their swing at the range as well as the putting and chipping areas.

"We'll just relax, probably hit balls at the range and prepare for Wednesday," said Escano.

Still to arrive for Southwoods is Artemio Murakami, one of Escano's Fil players, who caddied for Frankie Minoza in last week's Casio World Open in Japan.

Mizuno-DHL team captain Lovell Gopez said both teams are gunning for no less than a sweep of both divisions of the tourney.

Jong Arcano

San Miguel Beer draws first blood

From page A25

men's long dry spell with a jumper in the last 22 seconds, 82-79. Jeffrey Cariaso struck on the next play, but Olsen Racela split his charities off a foul from Rafi Reavis for 83-81.

Ildefonso added another free throw to set the final score after earlier knocking the ball off McClary's possession.

Talk 'N Text pummeled Sta. Lucia Realty, 123-106, earlier to place third and end its season on a respectable note.

Import Damien Cantrell, Asi Taulava and Jimmy Alapag set aside their bitter experience in the semifinals against Coca-Cola and focused on smothering the Realtors to secure their first-ever No. 3 finish.

Unlike in their forgettable semifinal series against the Tigers, Cantrell and Taulava displayed their old offensive flair while Alapag, Harvey Carey and Mark Telan played their supporting roles to the hilt.

Scores:

First Game

TALK 'N TEXT 123—Cantrell 35, Taulava 25, Alapag 14, Carey 12, Telan 12, Pablo 8, Locsin 6, Ravena 5, Belano 4, Fran 0, Villa 0, Manalo 0.

STA. LUCIA 106— Espino 30, Duremdes 26, Santos, 13, Mendoza 10, Adriano 7, Tan 7, Webb 6, Aquino 4, Batog 3, Victolero

Quarters: 31-25; 62-51; 91-77; 123-106.

Second Game

SAN MIGUEL 84—Johnson 17, Ildefonso 17, Pena 15, Belasco 13, Racela 10, Hontiveros 3, Victoria 3, Mente 0.

COCA-COLA 81—McClary 33, Wainwright 15, Cariaso 11, Hatfield 9, Juinio 6, Hawkins 4, Morano 2, Reavis 1, Avenido 0, Abarrientos 0, Antonio 0.

Quarters: 25-20, 42-38, 69-60, 84-81.

Barcelona wins vacant superfly title

By Salven L. Lagumbay

ERIC Barcelona knocked out Cebu's Sherwin Paro in the fifth round of their 12-round bout Saturday night to win the vacant Philippine superflyweight crown.

Barcelona, who only had a two-week notice for the fight, was leading on points entering the fifth round, but was clearly slowing down in a fight that was reduced into a clinchfest starting in the third.

Midway through the fifth round, the Bukidnon slugger unleashed a left straight that sent Paro to the canvas.

Paro, fighting sluggishly, got up then mysteriously fell to the canvas again and failed to beat referee Virgilio Garcia's count.

Air Force XI stamps class

THREE-TIME champion Philippine Air Force stamped its class anew, beating Army, 2-1, recently in the Globe Super Cup.

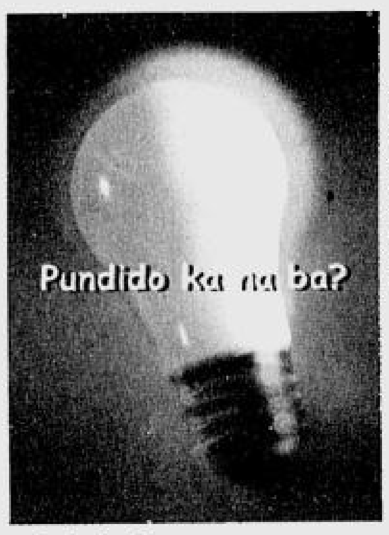
In other matches, Navy eliminated Ang Liga champion San Beda College, 1-0, while Samsung-UFL champions Kaya FC downed College of St. Benilde, 2-0, University of Santo Tomas scord a 3-0 decision over Presidents Men, Ateneo beat Nomads A, 2-1, and Mapua-Lions blanked Manila All-Japan, 3-0.

Romualdez is new football supremo

JOHNNY ROMUALDEZ won a four-year mandate as the new president of the Philippine Football Federation (PFF) in elections held Saturday at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City.

Romualdez, a left-footed star striker of several RP squads in the 1960s and currently the executive vice president of the PFF, will take over the reigns from Rene Adad, who chose not to run for re-election.

Romualdez received a unanimous 11 of 17 votes against his only rival, Rep. Monico Puentevella.



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Answer:
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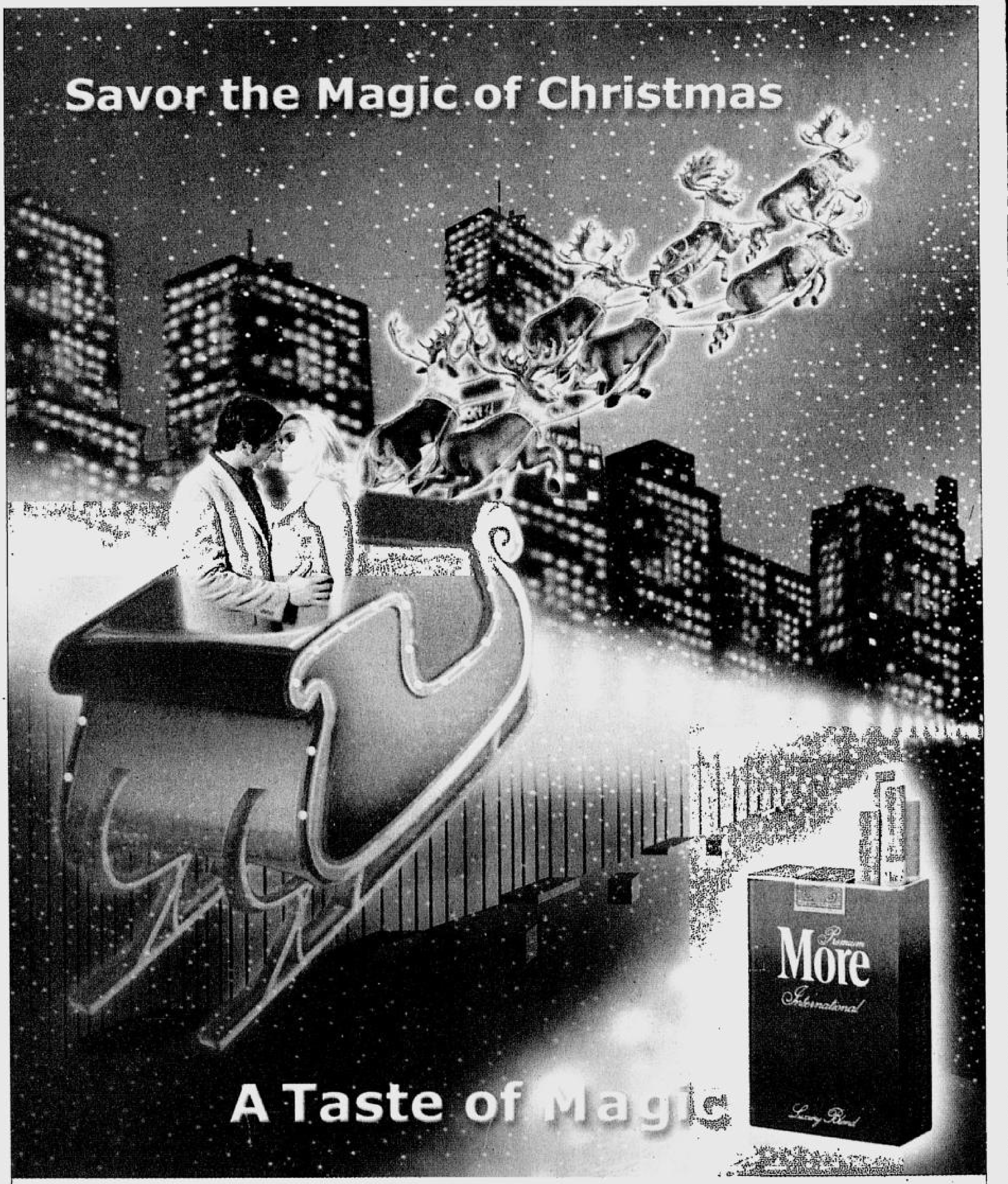

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BUENAVISTA: Going for long-distance hat-trick PDI PHOTO

Fearless forecast: 10-12 wins this

THE MOST prolific gold-medal machine of the Philippine contingent in the last Southeast Asian Games will be even more productive this time.

"We're going for 10 to 12 golds in Vietnam," declared controversial Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association (Patafa) president Go Teng Kok even as his coaching staff continued to complain about the lack of training support from the Philippine Sports Commission for the 35-strong athletics squad training in Baguio.

The RP record for most athletics golds in a SEAG edition is 10 and if the athletes run true to form, Go said they might even surpass that achievement.

Of the 31 golds the country clinched in Malaysia two years ago, Patafa accounted for eight on the playing field outright with the ninth gold rewarded months later to Dandy Gallenero in men's javelin after the adjudged winner was disqualified for failing the drug test.

While two previous gold medalists won't be around (heptathlon winner Elma Muros-Posadas has retired and marathon queen Christabel Martes is injured), the mainstays of Go's over-achieving 2001 team, led by Eduardo (Vertek) Buenavista, have shown marked improvements.

Buenavista, barely over 5 feet but a giant on the track with 2 golds in 2001, will be gunning for a long distance hat-trick if the schedule allows him to compete in the 3000 steeplechase, 5,000 meters and 10,000 meters, where he broke the RP record by over a minute in the Busan Asian Games last year.

If the three events are held too close to each other, Go said Buenavista, who will be the flagbearer during the Dec. 5 opening ceremony, will concentrate on a 5,000-10,000 double.

Taking care of the steeplechase g
be Rene Herrera, a 23-year-ol
Guimaras, who was a fighting fourt
event during the Asian Amateur A
held in Manila two months ago.

Another solid gold medal prospec
ma Bulauitan-Gabito in the womer
jump and Ernie Candelario and Joh
da, who are bidding to retain their 4
ter and 800-meter titles, respectively

Go said the 4x400-meter relay
Candelario, Jimar Aing, Rodrigo Ta
and Ronnie Marfil is due for a g
Lozada may just score another victo

SEA GAMES

More golds but no big RP finish seen

By Ernesto Gonzales

IT'S GOLD or bust.

This is the battlecry of some 100 athletes tasked to deliver the medals that will count for the 445-strong Philippine contingent in its bid to finish better than fifth overall in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games starting this week in Vietnam.

Definitely there will be more than 40 golds for the Filipinos this time, according to Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit, which is a lot more than the 31 victories the country achieved two years ago in Malaysia.

But he couldn't say where it would bring the Philippines in the overall fight.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain, head of the government agency tasked with the job of funding the training of the athletes and actual participation of what is actually a 654-member RP squad, continues to maintain a 40-60 gold medal haul.

Buhain, one of the most successful swimmers in the history of the SEAG, thinks hitting the maximum figure of 60 would hopefully give the country third place overall and serve as inspiration when the Philippines hosts the biennial sportsfest two years from now.

For sure, the Malaysia-Thailand-Indonesia-Vietnam overall finish two years ago will be overhauled, but whether the Philippines can crash through that elite circle is a big question mark.

With Vietnam expected to turn into a super power overnight as traditional hosts do since the Southeast Asian Peninsular (SEAP) Games that started in 1965 became the SEA Games in 1977, the Vietnamese may even wind up fighting for the overall crown.

For one, the Vietnamese have inserted two sports strange to Filipinos - fin swimming and shuttlecock - that they hope would be a rich source of gold.

The acknowledged powers in the region - Thailand and Indonesia - will be in the thick of the overall race again and Malaysia will be a force to reckon with simply because many of its champion athletes two years ago will still be around.

Although they rued the scrapping of bowling and golf where they captured a total of five golds in Malaysia, the Filipinos can recover those losses with a strong showing in chess where the RP team is led by the resurgent GM Eugene Torre.

Athletics has promised to contribute 10-12 golds to the RP campaign , wushu predicts no more than four and if the others live up to their potential, hitting 60 golds seems easy.

With Efren (Bata) Reyes and Django Bustamante in the lineup, the billiards team should easily improve its three-gold performance in Malaysia. The taekwondo-jins, bannered by four aces who are currently taking shots at Olympic berths in Paris, France, vow to also win more than three golds and recapture the team championship from Vietnam.

Based on their performance in the Asian Games, golds are forthcoming in karatedo, rowing and shooting where the Filipinos will be led by former practical shooting champion Jethro Dionisio and the veteran Tac Padilla.

Also vowing to create a golden impact after a shutout in Malaysia are boxing and cycling.

As the lowest form of international competition, the silvers and bronzes earned by the athletes in the SEAG don't get as much prominence, but officials will be taking a hard look of them this time.

Tthe Filipinos hope they would be ripe for gold-medal chores when the country hosts the SEAG in 2005

adidas
22ND SEA GAMES
VIET NAM
2003

Nat'l five toughened by defeat

By Roy Luarca

RP-CEBUANA Lhuillier got what it wanted. A quality game from a seasoned international campaigner.

The Filipinos, brushing up for their defense of the Southeast Asian Games men's cage crown, were beaten by the Olympic-bound Angolans, 90-78, in an exhibition game on Saturday.

Rather than worry, however, the result brought satisfaction to the national coaching staff headed by Aric del Rosario.

DEL ROSARIO

They felt that the Nationals learned valuable lessons from the Angolans, the seven-time African champions, which would be of use when they compete in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, from Dec. 6-12.

"The Angolans were Olympic veterans and have been together for a long time. They were fast, physical and methodical," said Del Rosario. "Our boys really got a taste of international play."

Assistant coaches Boyzie Zamar and Dong Vergeire agree.

"The boys learned the value of teamwork and role-playing," said Zamar, coach of the 2001 Kuala Lumpur SEAG champion team. "Now they know that the game is not all about individual talent."

"We saw some of our weak and strong points. Areas where we have to work on," said Vergeire, mentor of the 1997 Jakarta SEAG champion team. "It was like hitting two birds with one stone."

The Angolans, of course, belong to a higher level than their SEAG rivals.

But Zamar, whose team of stars from the defunct Metropolitan Basketball Association breezed to the title in KL, said there's no room for complacency.

"The quality of the SEAG competition gets higher each time. We can't afford to sit on our past laurels."

The Nationals, being supported by Cebuana Lhuillier honcho Jean Henri Lhuillier, will be leaving tomorrow with the main bulk of the Philippine delegation.

Composing the team are Ranidel de Ocampo, Ervin Sotto, Marc Pingris, Recaredo Calimag, Richard Melencio, Celino Cruz, Gary David, Dennis Madrid, Wesley Gonzales, Allan Salangsang, Rich Alvarez and James Yap.

Lhuillier has been designated as team manager with Danny Francisco as his assistant.

Interior and Local Government Secretary Joey Lina will be the head of the basketball delegation, including the Bai Cristobal-coached women's squad, according to Basketball Assocation of the Philippines secretary general Graham Lim.

TORRE

Everything's fine with Torre

EVERYTHING is fine for the men's chess team, but a major problem is hounding the women's team to the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games.

The country's top ranked female player has yet to hit town.

Lawyer Sammy Estimo, secretary general of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, said two gold medals are well within reach for the men's team headed by perennial skipper GM Eugene Torre.

As for the women's team, its chances of bagging a gold is depends on whether WGM-candidate Arianne Caoili would be able to arrive on time for the start of the chess competition on Dec. 5 in Ho Chi Minh City.

As of yesterday, there's no word on when Caoli is due from Brisbane, Australia, where she's based, and Estimo and Torre are going to Malacañang today to seek help regarding the plane tickets of Arianne and her Australian mother Ammette.

For his part, Philippine Sports Con
chair Eric Buhain has advised the C
buy their tickets in Australia to l
bursed upon their arrival.

"Without Arianne, the women
chances would definitely weaken,"
ted Estimo. "Arianne should be a co
in the rapid and standard individu
and she'd give the team the needed

Other members of the women
are WIM Beverly Mendoza, Oly
Christine Rose Mariano, Kathryn C

PSC: We are confident the President is awar

ALL 445 athletes in Team Philippines are in high spirits and their confidence so strong going into the 22nd Southeast Asian Games which starts this week in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh and nine other cities and provinces in Vietnam.

Chair Eric Buhain of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) admits to having goose bumps all over just thinking of the experience of competing in the games and bringing honor and glory not only to himself but to the entire country.

"I could still feel it," said Buhain, the former champion swimmer who ruled the SEA Games pools a decade ago. "Each time I see and send off our team, I cannot help but get that athletes' feeling over and over again."

The high morale is crucial for the athletes who will compete in 28 of the 32 sports Vietnam has calendared this time. And in their effort to bring honor and glory to the country in their respective fields, the government has, time and again, proven itself as a vital factor.

Buhain notes that government plays a major role in the SEA Games as it also does in the Asian Games, the Olympics and all other international sports competitions by providing the funds not only for the actual participation, but also in preparing and training of the athletes.

The 445-strong roster, according to Buhain, would require a total of P55 million for actual participation and another P35 million for competition equipment, which is aside from the P100 million already spent by the PSC for their training and preparation.

"Competition equipment alone may seem to be a small concern for others, but for an athlete who has dedicated his or her blood, sweat and tears to give honor for flag and country, it is one of the most important and vital aspects that motivates an athlete to excel," Buhain stressed.

"We are confident that the Preside
tally aware of the athletes' needs, es
at this time when they are at their
competition and are raring to do b
Vietnam," Buhain added.

The bulk of the budget would g
fare and board and lodging of t
member delegation in Hanoi and
Minh, including their allowances.

Also to fall under the new expenses
ments for equipment, luggage, unifo
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1,500 which he nearly won in 2001.

Also back to defend their titles are Roy Vence in men's marathon, Gallenero in men's javelin and his brother Fidel in decathlon.

Two other golden threats are Aing, a 24-year-old veteran from Basilan, in the men's 200 meters and Geralyn Amandoron in women's javelin.

While the athletes beef about inadequate supply of vitamins, old and worn out training gear and substandard equipment, particularly in the jumping events, Go said his wards have shown their gold-medal mettle after a long buildup that started with the Asian Games last year and the Asian trackfest last September.

"Despite their problems, they're going to win," confidently said Go, a known critic of politics in the Philippine Olympic Committee and the PSC, who survived an assassination attempt in front of the Patafa office several months ago.

Also competing are Marestella Torres, Narcisa Atienza, Jerro Perater, Ralph Waldy Soguilon,Melinda Manahan, Allan Ballester, Henry Dagmil, Joebert Delicano, Arniel Ferrera and Sean Guevarra.

Ernesto Gonzales

Jins worry only about fair scoring

Taekwondo star Geisler, 3 others gold potentials

GEISLER: Taekwondo spearhead PDI PHOTO

GIVEN fairer scoring, the country's taekwondo jins will be kicking the opposition around in Vietnam.

"Our aim is to capture first place overall and we have what it takes to do that," said team manager Dr. Noli Gabriel.

"We're well prepared," Gabriel added of the 15-man taekwondo squad bidding to get back at host Vietnam, which dethroned the Filipinos as champions in Malaysia, 4 golds to 3.

Four aces

Spearheaded by four aces now seeking Olympic berths in a qualifying tournament in Paris, France, the taekwondo squad has undergone a long, hard buildup in anticipation of an all-out show by Vietnam in its own backyard.

"If the tournament has a good lineup of referees and the scoring is fair, I'm sure we're going to get first place again," Gabriel emphasized.

Barring an unfortunate injury in the Olympic qualifying, veterans Donald David Geisler III (lightweight), Tshomlee Go (flyweight) and female jins Sally Solis (welterweight) and Kalindi Tamayo (bantamweight) will be prime gold prospects in Vietnam.

Gabriel said the fact that the four were given shots at berths in next year's Olympiad in Greece underscored their lofty credentials.

Another sure-fire bet for a gold is finweight Roberto Cruz, who is going for a record seventh straight title in the SEAG. Now 30 and a father of 2, Cruz has been untouchable in his class since posting his first win in 1991.

Promising teener

Veronica Domingo, winner in the women's lightweight in Malaysia, is back, but Gabriel said the team's surprise package could very well be Mary Antoinette Rivero, a 15-year-old junior at St. Paul (Pasig).

Gabriel said he has not seen the kind of promise Rivero had shown for a girl her age. A gold medalist in the US Open in Las Vegas, Nevada, last year, Rivero took a silver in the Korea Open and Asian Junior championships this year.

Rounding out the team are Dindo Simpao, Alexander Briones, Manuel Rivero Jr., Jefferthom Go, Dax Morfe, Eva Marie Ditan, Daleen Cordero, Margarita Bonifacio and Ann Margaret Boyle.

Another contender

Gabriel said Thailand will also be a contender for overall honors but it won't be as tough as Vietnam, which built the newest and biggest multi-sports gym in the SEAG precisely to host the taekwondo competition.

"Vietnam won its first Olympic medal through taekwondo so it is expected that the host will do everything to dominate the sport at home," said Gabriel.

But the Filipinos are unfazed, Gabriel said, because they know the odds and they're ready to buck them.

Ernesto Gonzales

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Sherrie Joy Mendoza, the reigning national titlist.

While the Filipinas are rated behind the powerhouse Vietnamese and at par with the Indons, Torre and Co. are the slight favorites in the men's division, especially in the rapid event.

"You can start any of them and the team's strength won't be affected," said Estimo. "That's how deep our men's team is," said Estimo." As to our individual bets (GM Joey Antonio and GM-candidate Mark Paragua), both should contend for the gold."

In standard team play, the Filipinos are also solid owing to their depth. Joining Torre, Antonio and Paragua is GM Bong Villamayor and IM Ronald Dableo, the reigning national champion.

Completing the rapid team is IM Jayson Gonzales.

"There's no doubt about the capability of our men's team. It is the women's team which faces an uphill battle," said Estimo.

Roy Luarca

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Manila to enhance coordination among members of the Philippine contingent.

The PSC will also shoulder expenses for in-land transportation and communication, as well as medical supplies aside from funding athletes joining the Southeast Asian Para-Games, set soon after the end of the regular SEAG.

The Vietnam games comes as the most crucial edition of the biennial sports conclave because the Philippines is hell bent on improving the 31 gold medals that brought it to fifth overall in the 2001 edition in Kuala Lumpur.

On the other half of the pie, in terms of honing athletes, are the national sports associations (NSAs), the very organizations which directly recruit, select, train and hone the athletes.

"The morale is as high as ever," said Buhain, "but in a battlefield where the hosts are not about to let the opportunity of bagging the overall championship, or finishing close to that slip their hands, the task is gargantuan."

"But I have my trust and confidence, not to mention the faith, in our athletes," he added, "They have never been this inspired and never have they been this ready to do battle."

Woe to the Magician's pool rivals in Vietnam

REYES: Out to redeem himself

PITY his opponents in the coming Southeast Asian Games—they're going to bear the brunt of Efren "Bata" Reyes' wrath.

Reyes suffered a frustrating 13-12 defeat to fellow former world champion Mika Imonen in their Cafe Puro 1st Philippine Open title duel Saturday night, leaving the Filipino idol hurting inside and aching for vengeance.

It was rare for the 49-year-old Reyes to be beaten when he was ahead (10-6) and even rarer when he's playing in front of his countrymen.

Fact is, Bata's son, 20-year-old Frennie couldn't recall an incident when his father led only to lose in 9-ball.

The defeat also took some glitter out of the Hall of Fame award conferred on him by the Billiards Congress of America before the finals of the $64,000 event.

That Reyes, the 1999 World Pool titlist, came home $10,000 richer for his runner-up effort was hardly any consolation.

Frennie knows that his father wouldn't exchange the money for the joy he would have brought to his multitude of fans.

"I hope my father can fight back in the SEA Games and bring the gold medal for the country," said Frennie, a third year Computer Science student of Holy Angel University in Angeles City.

Frennie, who bowed out in the elimination round of the RP Open, said his father is optimistic that they (billiards and snooker players) would be able to contribute substantially to the Philippine medal coffers in Vietnam.

The Nationals will be flying to Ho Chi Minh City tonight for the pool competition slated Dec. 5-11.

Completing the team chosen by the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines are world-renowned Francisco "Django" Bustamante, two-time SEAG (Brunei and Kuala Lumpur) gold medalist Lee Vann Corteza, Reynaldo Grandea, KL 15-ball gold medalist Warren Kiamco, KL 9-ball gold medalist Antonio Lining, Asian snooker champion Marlon Manalo, KL snooker gold medalist James Ortega, Felipe Tauro Jr. and Emilio Villariza.

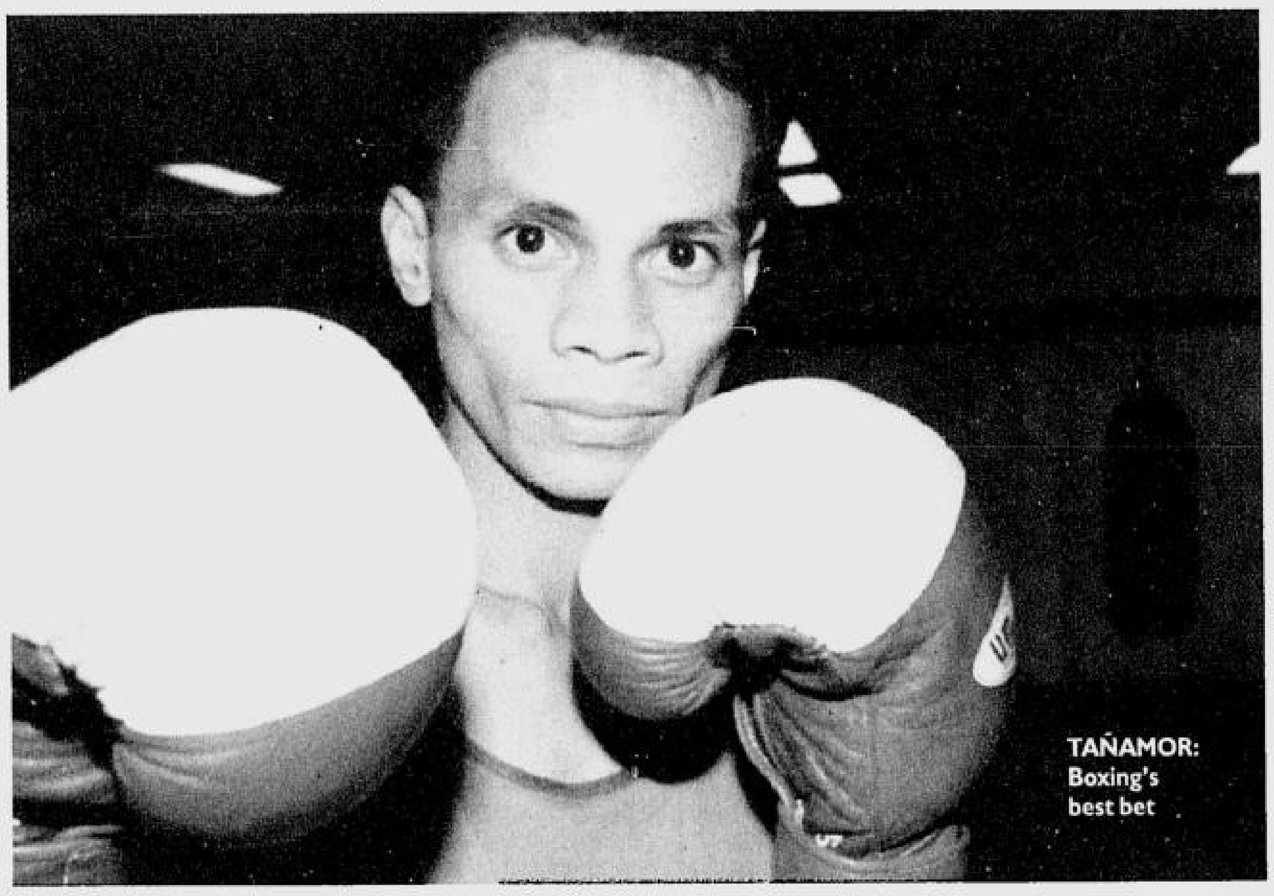
Bustamante and Lining also accounted for the 9-ball doubles gold in the Busan Asian Games.

They will be accompanied by Ricardo Ancaja and Alexander Tantoco.

Putch Puyat, president of Puyat Sports and acknowledged as billiards godfather, will also be planing in later to join the team.

Puyat wants to see how Bata and Django would redeem themselves and again bring glory to the country.

Roy Luarca



TAÑAMOR: Boxing's best bet

GOOD FOR 3 VICTORIES

Boxers out to reclaim lost glory

MANNY Lopez watched intently as the RP-Revicon boxers did their final sparring on Wednesday. He liked what he saw.

The boxers, out to reclaim Southeast Asian Games glory, appeared to be in sharp form. Their punches were crisp, strong. Their footwork fast and balanced. Their defense tight and solid.

They should be good for 3-4 golds in Vietnam, Lopez, the local boxing chief, and the coaching staff headed by Gregorio Caliwan assessed.

They're pinning their hopes on veterans Harry Tanamor, gold medalist in the 1st Afro-Asian Games held last month, and Violito Payla, gold medalist in the Acropolis Cup, Gee Bee Tournament and the Chowdry Cup.

Tanamor, also an Asian Games (Busan) silver medalist and World Cup (Thailand) bronze medalist, is the favorite in the light fly category and so is Payla, who is out to better his bronze output in the 2001 Kuala Lumpur.

Among the newcomers, Joan Tipon holds the brightest promise having topped the bantam division of the pre-SEAG tournament in Vietnam. The 21-year-old Tipon, champion of the last National Open in Palawan, eased out many time internationalist Arlan Lerio because the favored Thais aren't familiar with his style yet.

Juanito Magliquian also took the gold in the pre-SEAG, indicating his readiness to duplicate his gold medal in the 1999 Brunei edition of the biennial meet.

Caliwan and his deputies, Nolito Velasco and Pat Gaspi, believe everyone in the nine-man team is capable of reaching the medal round in Ho Chi Minh City, where the boxing competitions wll be held from Dec. 3-10.

They are Francis Joven, Florencio Ferrer, Fil-Am Christopher Camat, Mark Jason Melligen and Roel Laguna.

After all, almost all of them were able to compete in at least one of the eight international tournaments lined up for them by the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines in preparation for the SEAG.

Team RP Revicon, including team manager Ruben Roque, left Saturday.

Their mission: Improve on their two-silver, 3-bronze output in the 2001 KL edition.

Their chances: Bright if not very good.

Roy Luarca

Pinoy bets open up in archery, water polo

From page A25

The Philippines bagged a gold in the 2001 SEAG in Malaysia, courtesy of Purita Joy Marino. But Marino has quit after injuring her shoulder in practice.

Helping Chan pusue the RP bid are former SEAG gold medalist Joann Chan-Tabanag, Rachelle Cabral, Jasmin Figueroa, Marvin Cordero, Christian Cubilla, Florante Matan and ARnold Rojas.

The women shoot from 70 and 60 meters and the men from 90 and 70 meters in the first of two qualifying days to determine the top 32 who will make it to the Olympic Round. The OR is the knockout phase, where the top qualifier faces No. 32, No. 2 meets No. 31, and so on.

Four golds will be up for grabs—two in individual and two in team, both for men and women—in the competition which will have its awards ceremoney on Dec. 6, a day after the formal opening of the 22nd SEAG here.

The RP water polo bets face reigning SEAG champion Singapore at 10:30 a.m. at the Ng Dinh Stadium.

Coach Leo Galang, who is also chair of the RP Water Polo Committee, is likewise confident that the Filipinos will improve their fifth-place finish two years ago in Kuala Lumpur.

"We're rated among the top two here. Of course, we're elated," said Galang on the eve of the match. "But we will definitely give our best."

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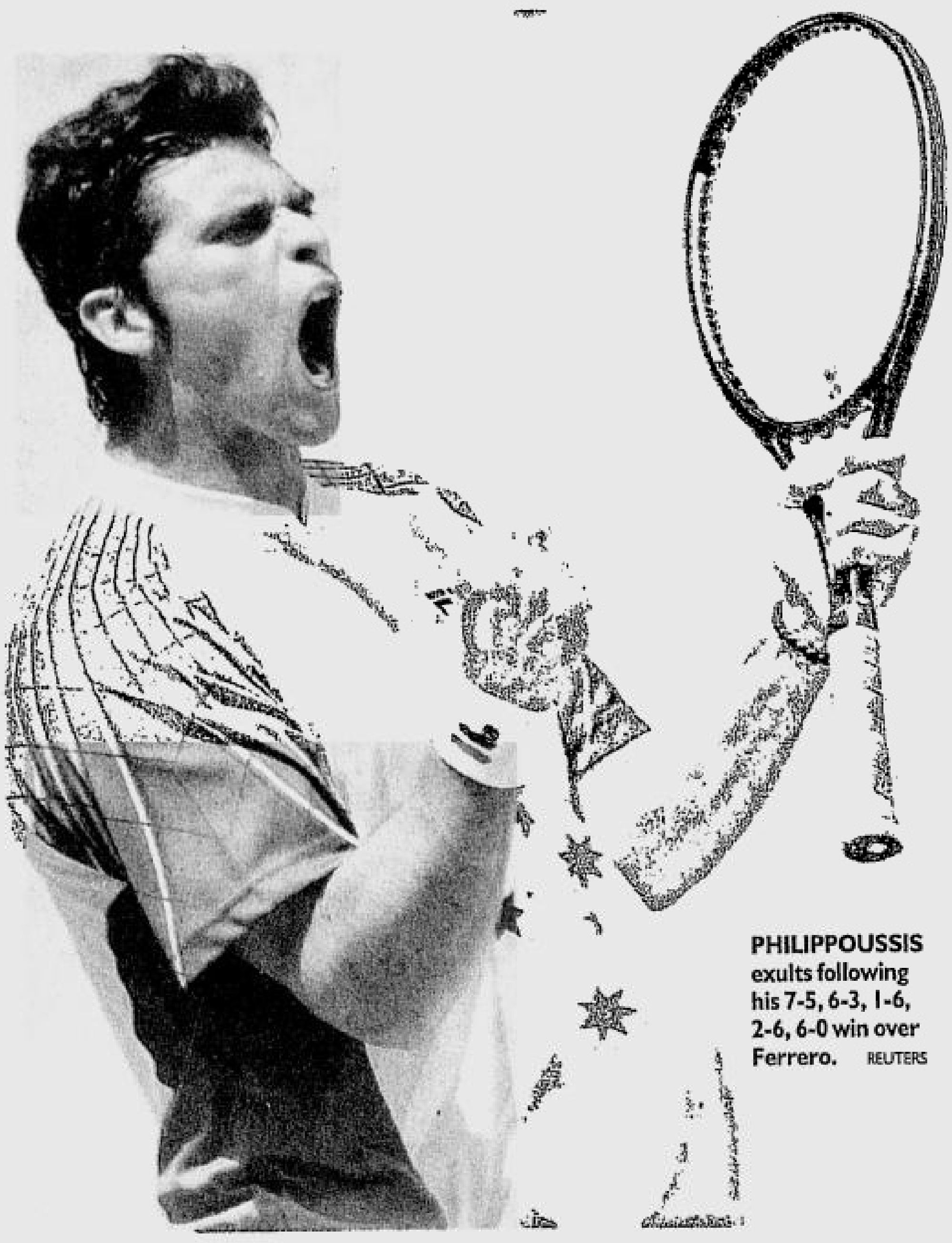


PHILIPPOUSSIS exults following his 7-5, 6-3, 1-6, 2-6, 6-0 win over Ferrero. REUTERS

28TH DAVIS CUP TITLE

Philippoussis lifts Aussies to victory

MELBOURNE, Australia—Mark Philippoussis threw his racket, then dropped to the ground, as much from pain and exhaustion as from exhilaration.

Fighting off an injury to his right shoulder, Philippoussis gave Australia its 28th Davis Cup on Sunday with a stirring 7-5, 6-3, 1-6, 2-6, 6-0 win over Spain's Juan Carlos Ferrero, clinching the best-of-five 2003 World Group final, 3-1.

"At the end I was just completely numb," said Philippoussis. "It felt like I wasn't playing—I was sort of watching from the side. I didn't know what was going on. Thank God those shots were going in."

A scheduled second reverse singles match Sunday between Lleyton Hewitt and Carlos Moya was not played.

Philippoussis, known as "The Scud," played strongly at first but then allowed Ferrero back into the match as the Australian ignored pain in his serving-side right shoulder. After the fourth set, when he received prolonged treatment, Philippoussis opened the decider to hold serve and then broke Ferrero to go up 2-0.

Holding his shoulder and wincing as he served, Philippoussis went up 3-0 in the next game and then broke Ferrero again in the fourth when the Spaniard's floating backhand went long.

He hit a hard overhand smash to finish the match, then dropped to the court while his teammates raced out to congratulate him.

Philippoussis said the shoulder started bothering him two days ago and that he'll undergo an MRI scan Monday to determine if there is a tear in the muscle.

"But there was no way I could quit, this is what Davis Cup is all about," he said. "You have to leave your heart out there."

Australian captain John Fitzgerald said: "I think we've got a guy today who just became a national hero."

It was Australia's first Davis Cup trophy win at home since 1986, when Pat Cash led Australia over Sweden at Kooyong in Melbourne.

It was also Australia's fourth finals win over Spain—all on grass. Spain's only Davis Cup win came over Australia on clay in Barcelona three years ago. *AP*

AUSTRALIA'S victorious Davis Cuppers pose with the trophy after defeating Spain, 3-1. Shown are (from left) Todd Woodbridge, Mark Philippoussis, captain John Fitzgerald, Lleyton Hewitt and Wayne Arthurs. REUTERS

Bye for finalists proposed

MELBOURNE—The Davis Cup finalists should receive a bye into the following year's second round, Spanish captain Jordi Arrese said on Sunday.

Spain lost the Davis Cup final to Australia in Melbourne on Sunday when Mark Philippoussis beat Juan Carlos Ferrero, 7-5, 6-3, 1-6, 2-6, 6-0, to give the home team an unassailable 3-1 lead.

The second reverse singles match was called off after the win.

When Spain won the event in 2000 they lost in the first round in 2001 while Australia, who lost the final to France on the same grass court in Melbourne later that year, was also knocked out in the first round in 2002. *Reuters*

Frankie caps stint with late blitz

FILIPINO ace Frankie Miñoza closed out his 2003 campaign with a birdie-eagle windup, posting a 2-under-par 70 yesterday to earn a share of 26th place in the $1.28-million Casio World Open 2003 at the Kaimon course of the Ibusuki Golf Club in Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan.

After being struck by a triple-bogey disaster on the 10th, Miñoza needed that sizzling finish to break par and avoid another disappointing showing in yet another struggling season.

Katsumune Imai completed a wire-to-wire romp with a 67 to win by seven strokes over Brendan Jones (67) and new circuit leader Shingo Katayama (66) with a whopping 24-under-par 264 aggregate.

Miñoza earned 1,064,000 yen (about P540,000) to close his 2003 book of earnings at 13,681,677 yen (about P7 million). He finished 68th in the rankings.

Only the Golf Nippon Series JT Cup is left in the Japanese Tour but Miñoza is not eligible to compete in the event since only the top 30 players of the money list make up the field.

He is expected to make a local appearance when the Philippine Open is staged at Mimosa this February.

Birdies on the seventh and eighth got Miñoza going only to falter with that triple-bogey blunder on the 10th. He made another birdie on the 12th but yielded another stroke on the next hole.

Miñoza's 18th hole eagle came after he birdied it in the second and third rounds. *Jong Arcano*

MIÑOZA: Eagle-birdie PDI PHOTO

STA. LUCIA TOUR

Alta Vista golfers gun for clincher

FRESH from routing the opposition in the Visayas leg it hosted, Alta Vista guns for the clincher in the final stop this week of the 2003 Sta. Lucia Golf Tour at the Eagle Ridge and Orchard courses.

The Cebuanos will try to protect a nine-point lead over Palos Verdes, with Eagle Ridge in third place, just 12 points behind, as the course-hopping series comes to an exciting conclusion this Friday at the Norman course of Eagle Ridge and on Saturday at the Palmer course of the Orchard.

After two legs, Alta Vista is on top with 69 points mainly due to its three-division sweep in Cebu last month. Palos Verdes has 60, Eagle Ridge is third with 57, Royale Tagaytay 38 and Orchard 34.

Unlike in the previous three stagings of the Sta. Lucia Tour, the rounds at the Orchard and Eagle will be treated as separate legs.

This will give the other teams a chance to stage a comeback in the race for the Sta. Lucia Cup, symbol of overall supremacy in the 108-round, five-course series featuring clubs operating under the banner of the real estate firm.

Alta Vista, the defending overall champion, will try to emulate the back-to-back feat pulled off by Eagle Ridge in the first two editions of the meet sponsored by Unirock, Petron, Readycon, Gainers Marketing, Kubota, Kodak, Samsung, Titleist, Footjoy, Yamaha, Omega and Pagcor with Marco Polo (Davao), Marriot (Cebu) and Dusit Hotel Nikko (Manila) as partner hotels and Cebu Pacific as the official carrier.

Vicente Santos and engineer Winfred Gob, co-chair of the executive committee, said a night of fun awaits the 240 participants when the awarding ceremonies of the event is held at the Palmer Hall of the Orchard.

Unique double tee range rising in Eagle Ridge

ANOTHER giant is rising at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club. This time, it's bound to be a twin.

Already done with its giant golf complex made up of four championship courses as well as four spanking new clubhouses, work has started on a unique driving range that will again distinguish itself from the rest mainly because of its size and design.

"A big club like Eagle Ridge needs a big range," said engineer Winfred Gob, project engineer of Eagle Ridge which is undoubtedly one of Asia's largest clubs.

Gob said that the range being constructed will have a minimum land area of 10 hectares and designed to have all the facilities for complete game improvement with chipping, putting and blasting areas.

Players teeing off from any of the four courses (Aoki, Dye, Faldo and Norman) need not worry.

The range will have two hitting areas on opposite ends servicing all courses, one close to the Aoki clubhouse and the other close to the Main and Family clubhouses which is in proximity to the first and 10th tees of the Faldo and Norman.

Each range will have a maximum of 50 bays (hitting stalls) and a provision for a second level. From one end to another, the total distance will be no less than 350 meters. Another feature is a three-tiered hitting area that will ensure a well-manicured turf plus the covered area.

"We hope to have the range completed in three months' time," said Gob.

In the future, Gob hopes to establish a golf academy that will help in the development of talents not just from the Cavite area but in the whole country. It shall also become a venue of major championships and the training ground of future national teams.

Eagle Ridge, a joint venture project of the Alsons Group and the Sta. Lucia Realty, is offering tournament packages including weekends at very affordable rates. For inquiries, call 046-4192855.

A "Bata" among men

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

UNLUCKY Efren "Bata" Reyes was a picture of a man dazzled and confused following his sorry loss to Mika "The Iceman" Immonen of Finland in last Saturday's finals of the well-attended first ever Café Puro-sponsored Philippine Open and Invitationals 9-Ball Billiards Championships at the Octagon Hall of the Robinsons Galleria.

Many were expecting Reyes to end the year on a bright note here by emerging the champion of this tournament, but their "Bata" lost to the visitor from Finland, 13-12, in the nerve-frazzling finals.

After storming to a big 9-4 lead in the race-to-13 showdown, Bata found himself—in the words of esteemed TV analyst Andy Jao—deserted by the "gods of billiards," enabling Immonen to come back strongly and, with the count at 10-6, pieced together four racks in a row to equalize at 10-all.

"Everybody's sitting on pins and needles," Jao said of the action in rack 25 where the two pool masters figured in a nail-biting battle of wits and safeties, with the count tied at 12-12. But in the end, youth prevailed experience as the 29-year-old Immonen, thoroughly cool, calculated and full of concentration, outlasted the 49-year-old Reyes. Now the world's No. 1 pool pro, Immonen, won $20,000 from the sponsors and the organizing Puyat Sports headed by renowned sports patrons brothers Popit and Putch Puyat and ABS-CBN. Early this year, Immonen also won the inaugural On Cue 1 Philippines-versus-Europe tournament, besting Ralf Souquet of Germany in an all-European finals.

The good-looking Immonen first made sports history in 2001 when he won the World Pool Championship in Cardiff, making sure that the world pool title is back in Europe following the Asian domination of the championship the past two years when Fong Pang-chao of Taiwan won in 2000 and Reyes in 1999.

Speaking of Reyes, I say he is a "Bata" among men, my man for all seasons. Reyes is dearly beloved by his legions of fans for his humanity, for his achievements and for his failures. It's worth reflecting on how he gave billiards respect and recognition; of how Bata Reyes, also called "The Magician," became one of a handful of Filipino athletes who has been showered with international acclaim, including a place in the prestigious Billiards Congress of America Hall of Fame. A consistent top four finisher in the world's major pool tournaments, Bata Reyes has earned nearly $200,000 this year.

Reyes is always a source of pride and fascination. Simple and humble, he will be leaving a lasting impression not only of his past exploits but also in the way he accomplished them. He became a living legend in billiards because of his limitless patience, strong discipline and serious dedication to the sport. And even though he did not receive a single centavo from the government in his international campaign, Bata Reyes has put the Philippines in the world map by consistently winning many major international tournaments, including the most recent money-rich Dubai and all-Japan Open in Osaka.

Bankrolled since 1985 by the Puyat brothers, Bata Reyes and his Puyat Sports teammates that include Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Canada-based Alex Pagulayan are role models to all Filipino athletes. When they compete abroad, they could do more than simply win matches. They could, at the same time, win friends and earn appreciation for their team and their sport.

***

JUST CURIOUS. There's more than meets the eye in the "loose accounting" of Manny Pacquiao's expenses in preparation for his non-title fight against Mexican idol Marco Antonio Barrera, whom he stopped in the 11th round. According to reports, Pacquiao's registered manager, Martin Luis Elorde, said Rodolfo Nazario, the boxer's business manager, failed to give him the receipts for $350,000 allegedly spent for training in California and Texas. Elorde said Nazario merely submitted the breakdown of the expenses. "*Kuwenta lang ng mga gastos.*" The son of boxing great Flash Elorde, Martin stressed Nazario started the accounting based on the original $350,000 purse and not on the $700,000 which turned out to be the actual purse set aside by cable TV network HBO.

Because of this confusion over money matters, Pacquiao has reportedly hired an American lawyer to negotiate a future deal with HBO, which is offering a more lucrative contract. The Filipino boxer is reported to be unhappy over the way his handlers have negotiated for his previous fights and now wants out with his present deal, including that with M&M Sports' Murad Muhammad, Pacquiao's American promoter.

Last year, Nazario inked for Pacquiao a 2 1/2 year promotional contract with Muhammad for fights in the United States worth $2.65 million. Before that, Nazario had clashed with Elorde, who was then negotiating a similar contract with HBO. But Elorde eventually allowed Nazario to take over all future negotiations for Pacquiao. Then came the HBO revelation that the actual purse was $700,000 and not $350,000 as Nazario had openly announced. Elorde said they all knew before the fight that they are entitled to $350,000. But it seems the purse is $700,000. Nazario said half of the purse, or $350,000, was spent for Pacquiao's promotion and training in the US, including air fare and board and lodging for members of Team Pacquiao.

"But I doubt whether Manny's training expenses reached $350,000," said Elorde.

Cash, Hopper, Sison set up Subic camp

FORMER Wimbledon champion Pat Cash will conduct a five-day Tennis Master Camp at the Subic Bay International Tennis Center in Subic Bay Freeport Zone on Dec. 17.

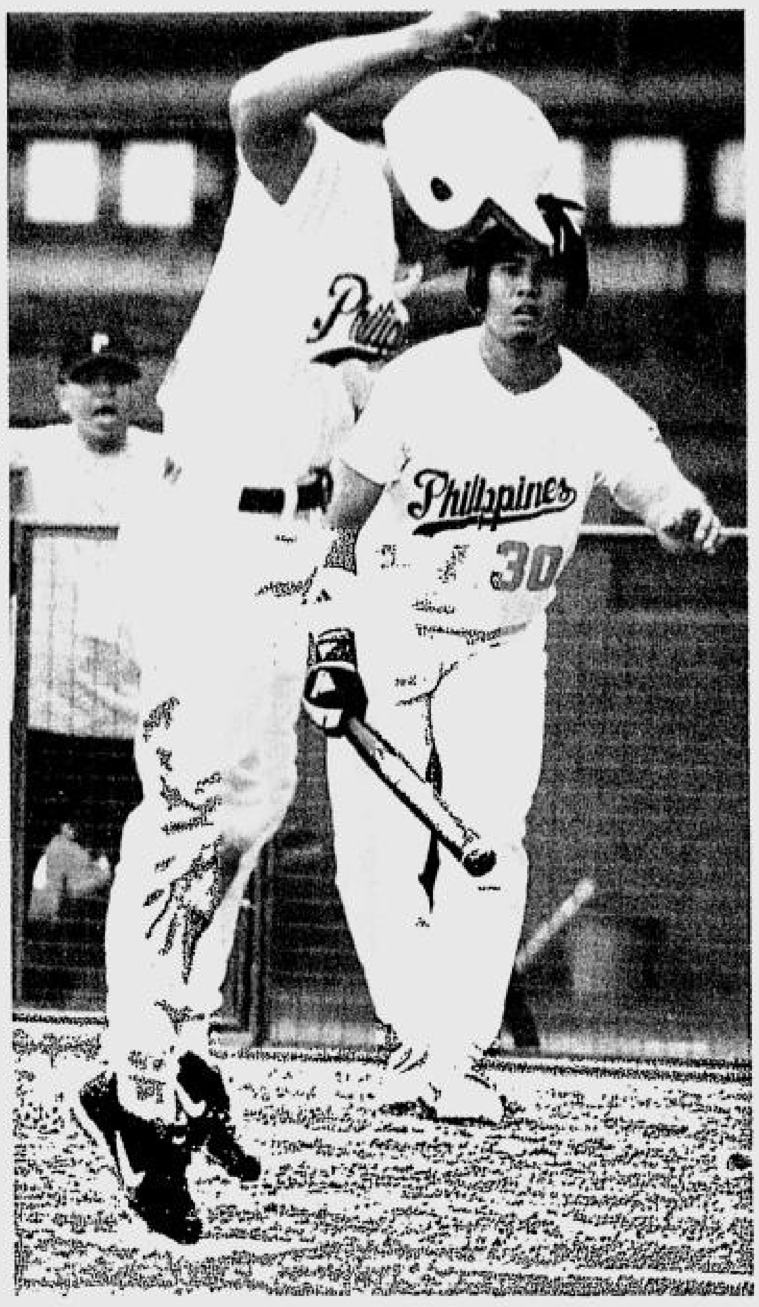
Together with Dr. Gavin Hopper of the Cash-Hopper Tennis Academy and former Cupper and ATP Tour player Beeyong Sison, Cash will lead a team of coaches that will perform a series of Master Camps throughout Asia to help develop players into world-class beaters.

Hopper, the world renowned "tennis guru" who trained tennis stars Lleyton Hewitt, Mark Philippousis, Monica Seles and Amanda Coetzer, recently established the Cash-Hopper International Tennis Academy headquarters in Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia.

The Master Camp offers training programs for all ages. For inquiries, call Philta at (02) 525-6434 or 523-6415 or Subic Bay International Tennis Center at (047) 252-2885.

ASIAN SOFTBALL

Blu Boys, Taiwanese clash today



APOLONIO Rosales easily scores for Blu Boys. JESS YUSON

STANDINGS	W	L
Group A		
Japan	2	0
Hong Kong	2	0
Indonesia	0	2
Thailand	0	2
Group B		
Philippines	2	0
Chinese-Taipei	2	0
India	0	2
Iran	0	2

GAMES TODAY (Rizal Memorial)
9 a.m.—India vs. Iran
11 a.m.—Indonesia vs. Thailand
1 p.m.—Chinese-Taipei vs. RP
3 p.m.—Hong Kong vs. Japan

THE REAL battle for the Philippine Blu Boys begins today.

After dumping India with another abbreviated 7-0 win yesterday, the Filipinos will be finally tested by Chinese-Taipei today in the 7th Asian men's softball championship at the Rizal Memorial ballpark.

Both undefeated in Group B, the Blu Boys and the Taiwanese collide at 1 p.m. in what is actually a showdown for the top spot in the bracket.

"Ito ang tunay na laban (This is the real contest)," said RP head coach Reynaldo (Baby) Manzanares.

The Indians showed up with a respectable pitcher but they were no match for the Filipinos, who had earlier clobbered Iran with a similar five-inning 7-0 rout.

Chinese-Taipei posted its second straight win with an 8-1 blasting of Iran two days into the meet serving as the Asian qualifying for the 2004 World Championship in Christchurch, New Zealand.

The Taiwanese are considered as the only threat to an expected Philippine-Japan showdown for the title.

But Manzanares likes the Blu Boys' chances.

"Our first two wins were actually in preparation for our game against Chinese-Taipei. I think we have a good chance against the Taiwanese," he said.

Florante Acuna, a member of the Zamboanga City squad that won the National Softball Open last year, limited the Indians to a single hit while striking out nine. He issued two walks.

First baseman Mark Ramirez blasted a two-run homer in the fifth inning and went 3-for-3 for the Blu Boys.

As dominant as the host country was Japan, which blanked Indonesia, 14-0, for its second straight win.

The Japanese are currently tied with Hong Kong, a 2-0 winner over Thailand later in the day, in Group A.

Raptors acquire Rose from Bulls

TORONTO—The Toronto Raptors have acquired forward Jalen Rose from the Chicago Bulls in a six-player deal that cannot be made official until the NBA office reopens on Monday, according to reports on Saturday.

The long-rumored deal will take Rose, forward Donyell Marshall and forward Lonny Baxter to Toronto for veteran power forward Antonio Davis, forward Jerome Williams and seldom-used forward Chris Jefferies.

The Raptors held Davis and Williams out of their game on Saturday night in Miami, while Jefferies is on the team's injured list.

Both the Fan 590, the Raptors radio broadcast station, and Sportsnet, the television station that carries many of their games, reported the proposed deal on Saturday. *Reuters*

Iverson hits 50 as Sixers down Hawks

PHILADELPHIA—Allen Iverson scored a season-high 50 points Saturday to lead the Philadelphia 76ers to a 98-86 victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

Weakened by a flu, Iverson had a season-low 12-point performance on Friday in which he missed 15 of 19 shots in a loss to Indiana.

"I didn't feel better, but I was rested," Iverson said of Saturday's performance.

It was the ninth time, including playoffs, that Iverson has scored 50 or more points in his eight seasons. He had 55 in a playoff victory over New Orleans last April.

"He was phenomenal," Sixers coach Randy Ayers said. "We really needed it."

Kenny Thomas had 13 rebounds and reserve John Salmons added 13 points for Philadelphia, which leads the Atlantic Division despite a 9-9 record.

Jason Terry had 20 points and Shareef Abdur-Rahim had 17 for the Hawks, who are off to a 6-12 start.

In New York, Allan Houston scored 18 points, and Dikembe Mutombo added 13 points, 12 rebounds and five blocks to help New York beat New Orleans, 79-74.

Mutombo got the Knicks started with 11 points and seven rebounds in the first half, and Houston scored 13 during a sluggish second half for both teams. *AP*

Complete results: New York 79, New Orleans 74; Philadelphia 98, Atlanta 86; Detroit 80, Washington 69; Memphis 122, Cleveland 115 (2OT); Miami 78, Toronto 66; Dallas 92, Minnesota 88; Milwaukee 100, Boston 94; Seattle 95, Houston 88; Golden State 91, San Antonio 89; Denver 98; LA Clippers 86.

Bailey posts record 70 stakes victories

BAILEY: It's a load off my back. AP

NEW YORK—Jerry Bailey won three stakes races at Aqueduct on Saturday for a record 70 stakes victories this season.

Bailey rode Congaree to victory in the Grade 1 $350,000 Cigar Mile, Read the Footnotes to first in the Grade 2 $200,000 Remsen Stakes and Ashado to the win in the Grade 2 $200,000 Demoiselle Stakes.

Bailey's 70 stakes victories surpassed the previous mark of 68, established by Mike Smith in 1994.

"It's a load off my back," Bailey said of the record. "I'm glad to get it over with."

Congaree beat Midas Eyes by 5 1/4 lengths for a second straight win in the Cigar. It was the fifth win in nine starts this year for the 5-year-old by the 1991 Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner, Arazi.

It was also Bailey's fourth winning ride in the Cigar. In addition to win with Congaree, he won the with Cigar himself in 1994, with Sir Bear in 1998 and with El Corredor in 2000.

Conceding from six to eleven pounds to his rivals, Congaree carried 124 pounds and covered the mile in 1:34 1/5 over the fast track to earn $210,00 for Stonerside Stable.

"I talked to Jerry (Bailey) yesterday and he told me he might have to use Congaree, and I told him to go ahead and do what he had to do," trainer Bob Baffert said in a teleconference "He trained very well since the Breeders' Cup and he was very sharp.

"When you mention top milers, you have to mention Congaree. He's terrific going seven furlongs and a mile."

Congaree paid $3.20, $2.60 and $2.20. Midas Eyes returned $4.60 and $3.50, and Toccet paid $5.60 to show.

Ashado beat La Reina by a nose, covering the 1 1/8 miles in 1:52 4/5 to earn $120,000 for Starlight Stables. It was the fourth win in six career starts for the filly by Saint Ballado.

Bailey's record-breaking ride came aboard Read the Footnotes, who came from just off the pace to register a 3 3/4-length victory in the Remsen Stakes for 2-year-olds. *AP*

Royal Catch steals show . . .

From page A32

"*Pagsungaw sa rekta, alam kong malaki na ang panalo* (I knew he had a big chance of winning when we reached the homestretch)," said Zarate, who only a week back piloted Wind Blown to a historic victory in the 8th Marho Breeders' Cup Classic.

Dandansoy (Val Dilema) swung into the picture only at the last turn and came up short to settle for second spot, while Serena (Andrei Sullano) arrived another length back at third. Staunch Ally (Dominador Borbe Jr.) finished fourth then came Windlass (Jonathan Hernandez) and Southern Charm (Lyndon Guce). Lord of All was scratched.

Royal Catch, only the fifth choice in the betting, was bought by Esguerra along with Real Slew, another import whom experts predict would also make waves here.

Conditioned by Nestor Manalang, Royal Catch covered the race in 1:41 flat (24-24-25-28). It was his second win in five starts thus far.

Staunch Ally's owner, Marho president Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, was among those who congratulated Esguerra after Royal Catch prevailed.

"In a few more months she will be fully adjusted and I think she'll be hard to beat," said Puyat of Royal Catch.

Earlier, Material Maker (Strong Material-Rhummaker) emerged the top candidate in the Presidential Gold Cup by ruling the Japan Racing Association Cup, while import Buena Sera (Ascot Knight-Joaquinha) triumphed in the Philippine-Japan Friendship Cup.

Tap Dance City captures Japan Cup

TOKYO—Tap Dance City, one of the outsiders, romped to victory and the first prize of 250 million yen ($2.3 million) in the Japan Cup on Sunday.

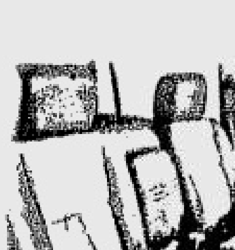
Ridden by Tetsuzo Sato, Tap Dance City built a huge lead and made all the running to triumph by nine lengths.

The first five past the post were all trained in Japan as the home side routed challengers from England, France, the US and Australia. Tap Dance City held the rail position on the rain-drenched course and raced alone. *Reuters*

VANITY? MAYBE. LUXURY? ABSOLUTELY!
CROSSWIND

Isuzu steps out and reveals its lustrous New Crosswind. Showing-off its well-endowed exteriors and plush interiors and strutting with a variety of vibrant colors, the new Crosswind allows you to experience an exciting, powerful, versatile vehicle with utmost bravado.

The NEW ISUZU Crosswind



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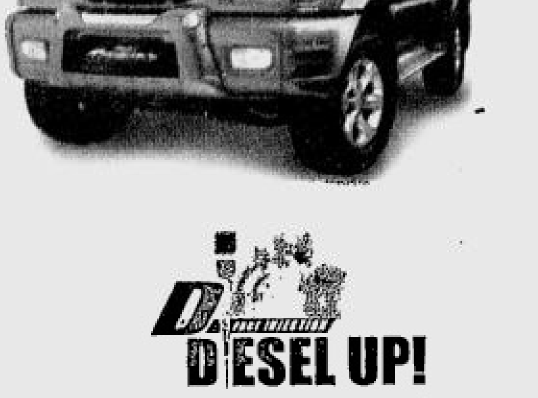

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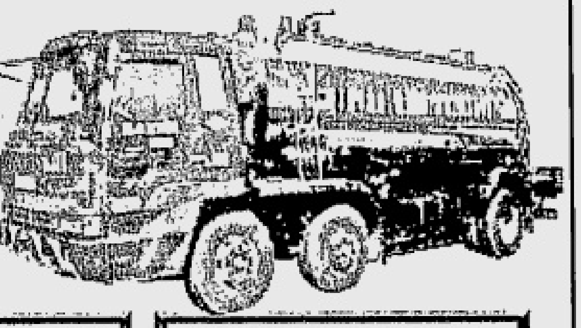
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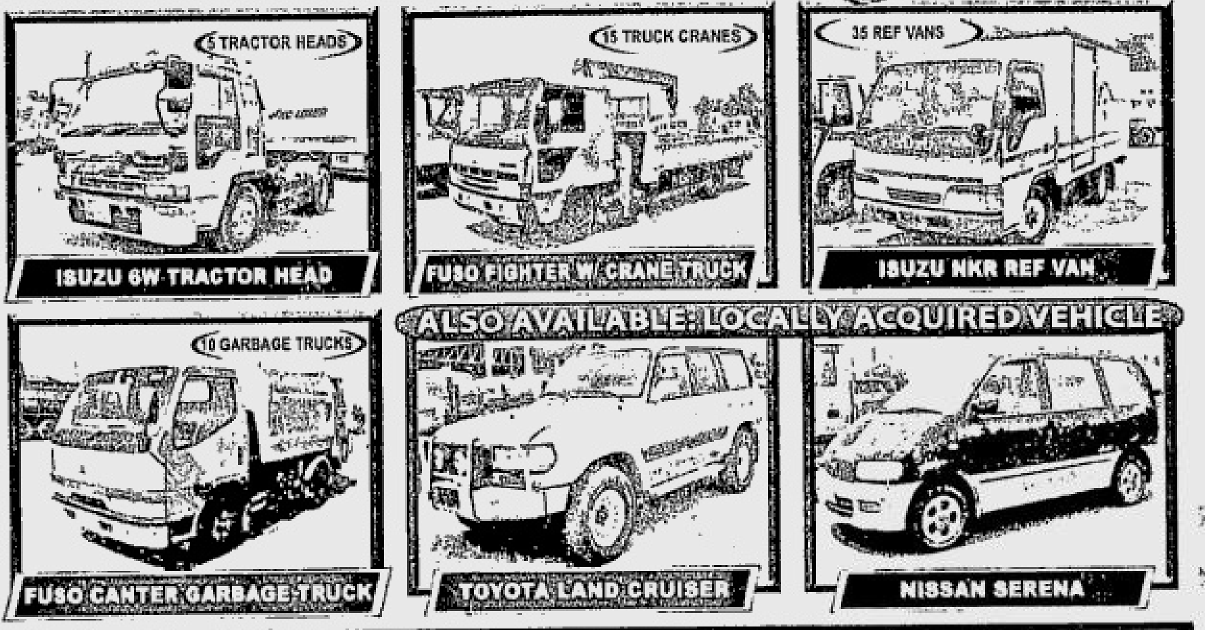
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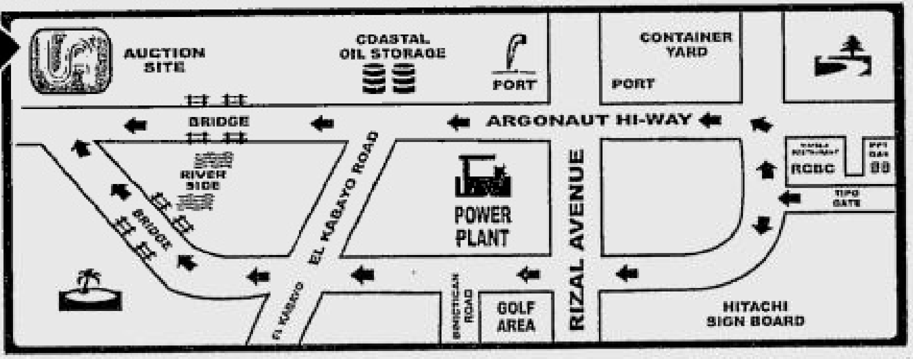
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SPORTS

Royal Catch steals show in PSA Cup

By Edwin Villanueva

IMPORTED filly Royal Catch put his blinding speed to great use to outclass the field yesterday in the 2003 Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) Cup at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite.

Rated superbly by Jeffril Zarate, the 4-year-old roan bucked early pressure from Southern Charm then weathered a late charge by top pick Dandansoy to win the one-mile event by a length.

Sired by Kings' Theatre out of Chase the Chick, Royal Catch picked up P240,000 after ruling the race held in honor of the late Rudy Navarro.

"This win is for Tata Rudy. I know he's happy wherever he is now," said Esguerra, referring to the former Tempo sports editor who was himself an avid *karerista*.

Royal Catch, acquired by Esguerra last August from the William Inglis & Son Ltd. in Sydney through Marho director Ramon Balatbat, shook off Southern Charm nearing the far turn and rounded the home turn enjoying a four-length lead.

ROYAL/ A31

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BSP, SEC to jointly oversee money changers

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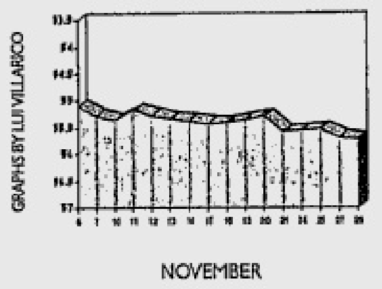

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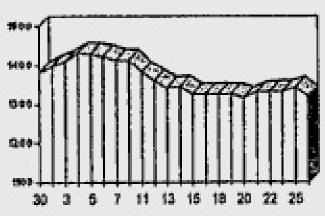
STOCK MARKET

Stocks seen to weaken

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

STOCKS are seen to trade in a tight range with a negative bias this week as investors seek the next catalyst to push or pull the market.

The Phisix, the stock market's main index, fell 20.43 points or 1.53 percent to 1,313.87 from the level of the previous week after markets were spooked by popular actor Fernando Poe Jr.'s announcement that he would run for the presidency, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho's resignation and the possible credit rating downgrade of the Philippines' sovereign debt by Moody's.

The market ignored the favorable gross domestic product data released Thursday that showed the economy grew 4.4 percent in the third quarter from last year.

AB Capital Securities economist and analyst Jose Vistan noted that investors were caught in a vacuum as the third quarter's economic and profit reporting season has past.

"The latest economic data are solid and should bode well for the market. However, political uncertainties and global terrorism will continue to be the market's biggest potential pitfall. And as investors grow cautious

STOCKS/ B6

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Securities and Exchange Commission have agreed to jointly monitor the operations of money changers and non-bank remittance centers to help plug all potential outlets for money laundering in the financial system.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the central bank would regulate these firms while the SEC would supervise them. The consensus should end the confusion among more than 1,000 money shops and remittance centers as to which agency would oversee their operations.

The BSP and the SEC are both members of the Anti-Money Laundering Council, the group monitoring and investigating money laundering cases.

Regulation of money changers will boost the Philippines' bid by next year to finally get out of the Financial Action Task Force's list of economies still weak in fighting money laundering.

"We will only regulate them, not supervise," Buenaventura said, adding that the BSP and the SEC would have to "make a clear distinction between regulation and supervision."

As a regulator, Buenaventura explained that the BSP would have to "make sure that the industry is adhering to guidelines on reporting," particularly on suspicious transactions as defined under the Anti-Money Laundering Act or AMLA.

On the other hand, SEC will take the supervisorial responsibility, which Buenaventura explained involves the examination of their financial statements.

The BSP chief said the central bank was finalizing the draft circular that would define the reporting requirements of money changers in relation to suspicious transactions.

The classification of money changers based on "capital, resources and volume of transactions" would be one of the salient features of the circular, he said.

The FATF had ordered a tighter licensing, regulation and monitoring of money changers as these businesses all over the world have been suspected of be-

BSP/ B2

Shipbuilding industry finds hub in Cebu

By Doris C. Dumlao

FEATURE

BALAMBAN, Cebu—This idyllic island, which is two hours' drive from metropolitan Cebu, has emerged as a hub for the Philippines' pioneering shipbuilding industry, producing world-class sea vessels for export.

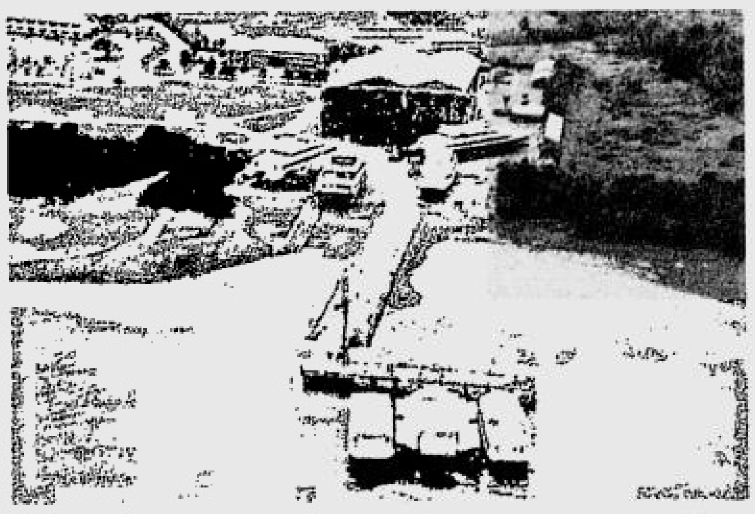
Two shipbuilding companies, FBMA Bobcock Marine Inc. and Tsuneishi Heavy Industries Inc., are currently beefing up their capacity to meet higher demand. The combined turnover of these companies—which are separate joint ventures between the Aboitiz group and two foreign principals—are projected to exceed $90 million by next year.

While financing for sea vessels tightened when the Asian crisis erupted in 1997, demand from the global market was again picking up, said Icker Aboitiz, who is in charge of Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.'s shipbuilding concerns.

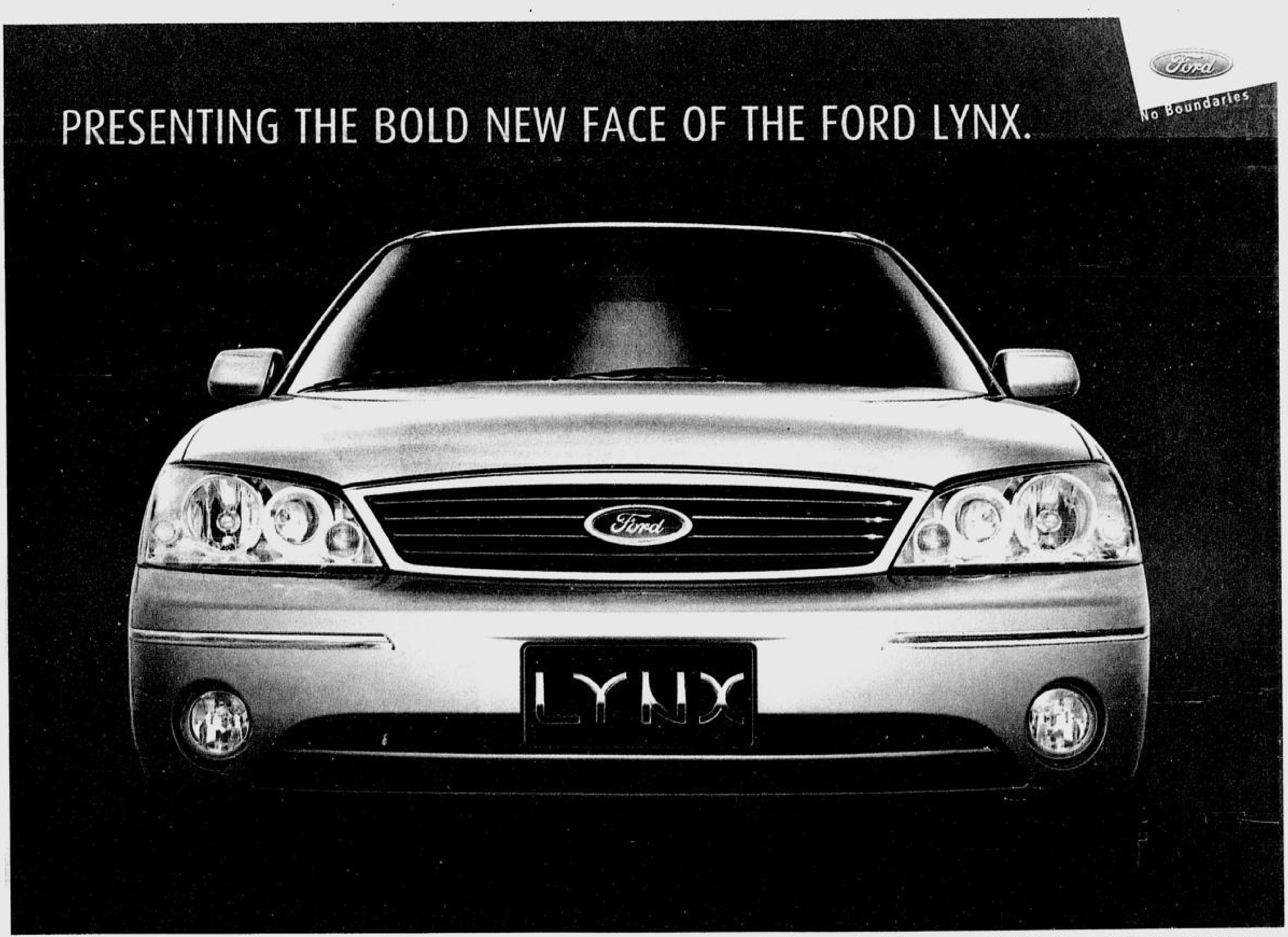
FBMA Bobcock Marine is a 50-50 joint venture with UK-based Bobcock while THI is a 20-80 venture with Tsuneishi of Japan, with the controlling stake owned by the latter.

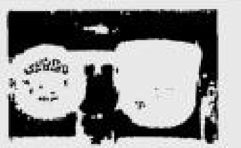
The Aboitiz-Bobcock venture, which has bagged a new contract

SHIPBUILDING/ B9



WEST Cebu Industrial Park, home to the country's only shipbuilding facility.





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BSP chief sees OFW remittance hitting $8B in 2004

By Clarissa S. Batino

DOLLAR inflow from eight million Filipinos working overseas is expected to hit $8 billion in 2004 as the improving global economy creates more and better job opportunities for nurses, IT experts, seafarers, teachers, caregivers and other professionals, according to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

"I think we could still manage to increase our OFW remittance next year by about 5 percent. This would bring us to $8 billion by the end of 2004," the BSP governor said in an interview.

This year, the central bank adjusted its outlook on offshore workers' remittance to a 6-percent growth from a flat growth forecast during the height of the US-Iraq war. A 6-percent growth should bring in $7.6 billion by year's end from $7.2 billion in 2002.

As of September, Filipinos overseas have sent home $5.39 billion to their families here.

The central bank had estimated that more than $5 billion in OFW remittance passing through informal channels like couriers and money-changers were not being booked by the government.

Buenaventura is not worried that deployment of OFWs this year had been declining.

As of September, deployment had dropped by 5.6 percent as only 669,419 Filipinos left for employment abroad against 708,859 in the first three quarters of 2002. This, even as the number of Filipino seafarers overseas rose by 3.2 percent to 162,581 from 157,552 a year ago.

"I think sea-based workers would continue to increase while the land-based would pick-up. We are hoping to send more nurses and other Filipinos to higher paying jobs which should not only improve their status but also allow them to send more money to their families," the BSP chief said.

The BSP is counting on higher OFW remittances this year to offset the slowdown in foreign direct investments and sluggish exports.

Buenaventura said the central bank had been seeing an increasing amount of dollar inflow from OFWs. Remittance is expected to pick up in the fourth quarter as offshore workers send money to pay for tuition fees in October and for the Christmas festivities in the last two months.

The BSP pointed out that the slowdown in the deployment of land-based workers affected mostly the low-income workers like domestic helpers as the number of caregivers, engineers, performing artists and other high-paying jobs actually increased.

Dollar remittances form part of the country's current account, a big component of the balance-of-payments reflecting movements in trade.

The labor department is targeting to deploy a million Filipinos abroad. In 2002, the POEA said the level of freshly hired and re-hired reached 891,908 versus 867,599 the previous year.

Foreign exchange inflow from overseas workers comprises nearly 85 percent of the country's gross earnings. It normally accounts for the usual half-a-percentage point difference between the gross domestic product and the gross national product.

Commercial banks report about 85 percent of total remittances while foreign exchange firms report 10 percent of the total. The data on the remaining 5 percent come from offshore banking units.

BSP . . .

From page B1

ing conduits for illegally acquired funds. The so-called "hawala" system in Islamic countries is also under the tight watch of the FATF.

"The essence of regulating money changers is in relation to the reporting of suspicious and covered transactions under the AMLA," Bangko Sentral general counsel Juan de Zuñiga Jr. said.

Covered transactions under the AMLA involve an amount exceeding P500,000 within one banking day. Suspicious transactions may involve any amount provided there seems to be no underlying legal or trade obligation for the transaction.

Under the law's implementing rules, covered institutions must report to the Council all suspicious transactions within five working days from their occurrence.

Another official said the BSP could also include in the regulation the informal channels through which some overseas Filipino workers send money to their families.

There are thousands of money changers operating in the country but authorities would like to regulate and supervise only the big ones, for instance the top 200, on the basis of capitalization and volume of business. These mostly operate in Binondo and Ermita.

Money shops that are not subsidiaries or affiliate of banks are only required to submit incorporation papers to the SEC and obtain a permit from the municipality or city where they operate.

Supervision over the non-bank money shops was removed from the central bank by the New Central Bank Act of 1993 as well as the liberalization of the country's foreign exchange market.

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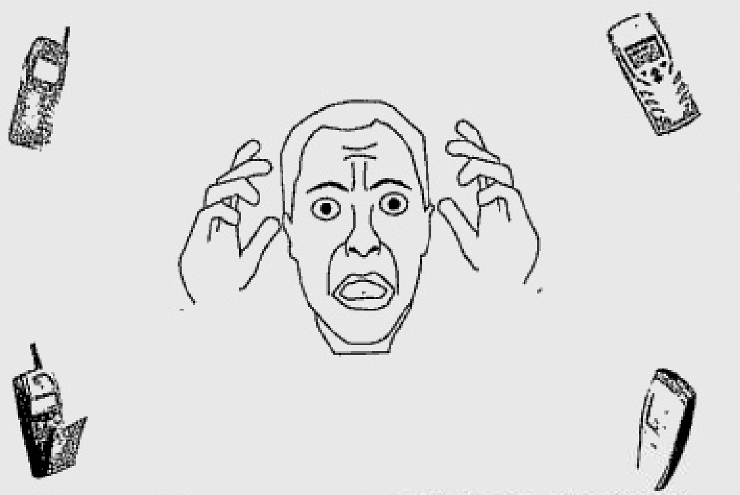

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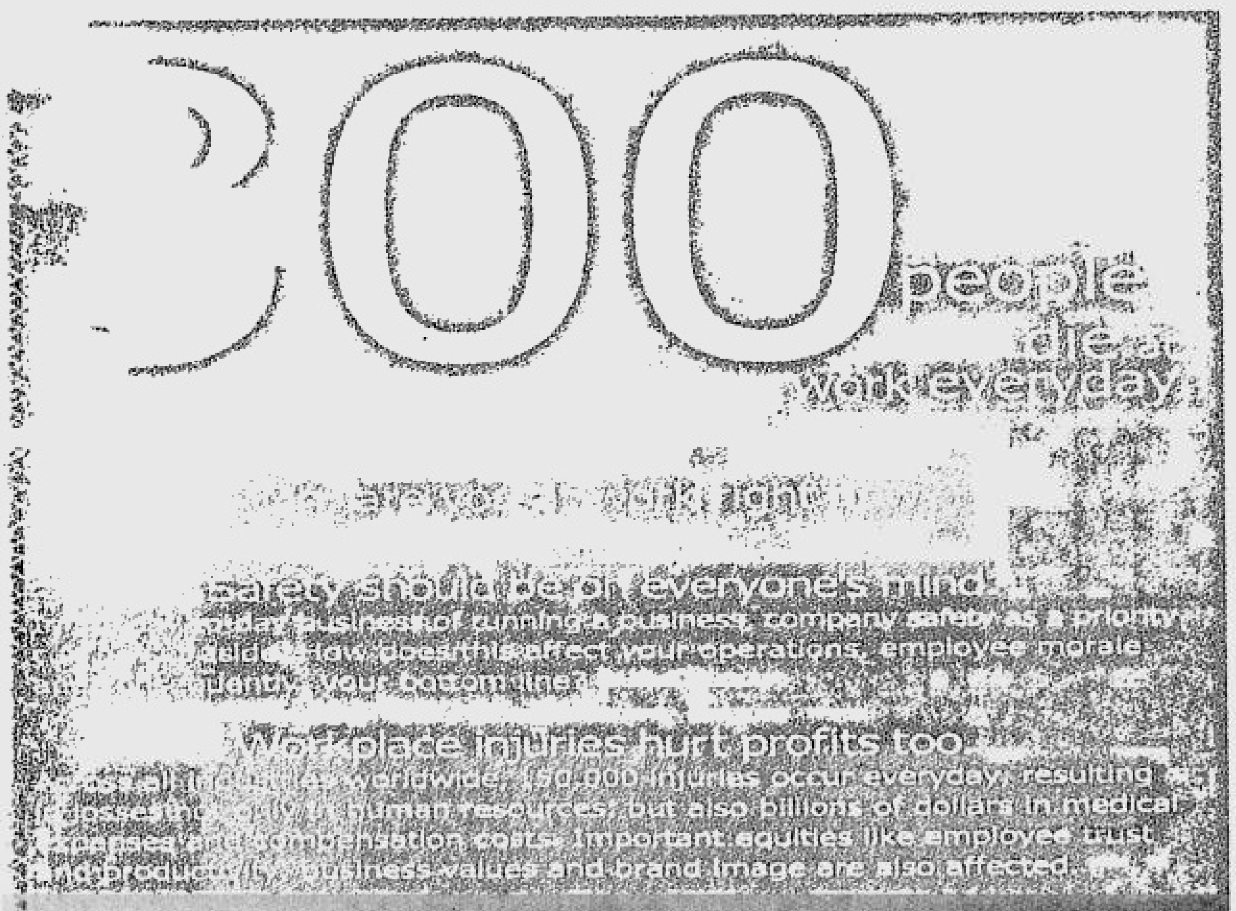
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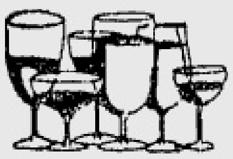
Out of the (shoe)box

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

IF you are a mall rat grown tired by sardines-like crowds and price-gouging yet equally choked carparks, then you would love the new SM mall in Marilao, Bulacan.

Despite being located in the rural-urban tangle of towns lining up the decrepit MacArthur Highway, the Marilao mall has wider aisles and taller ceilings than the flagship SM Megamall's.

Parking is free and plentiful, and, as the car park is the open expanse surrounding the Marilao mall, just like a typical American mall, there are no 20-minute waits just to get in line, go through a security check, and circle around for an elusive slot that car-riding shoppers have to go through every time they go to Makati and Ortigas carparks.

Like the new SM Baguio, the two-story Marilao mall breaks away from the formula shoebox design—rows of light-admitting clerestory top the structure—that for so long has proved to be a cost-and-energy efficient design for the SM chain.

The new mall's outside walls are also liberally splashed with candy and earth colors, unlike the gray, concrete slab that shoppers long associated with SM.

And, in an area that has yet to see modern plumbing and dependable water supply, the Marilao mall, a veritable mini-city, has flushing toilets. Even the water faucet flow is a gusher compared to the trickle from the men's room faucets of Greenbelt 3 theaters.

SM heir Hans Sy said the mall engineers had to dig two underground wells to source the water, and build an underground treatment-recycling plant to ensure 24/7 supply, before any effluents are discharged—the SM engineers also had to design and lay the sewage pipes themselves—to the nearest river half a kilometer away.

For those who have not seen MacArthur Highway in ages, that corridor has long lost its rural charm and is now clogged with a Sampaloc-like density of sidewalk-less shops and equally grimy houses.

From these rows upon rows of jerrybuilt congestion, suddenly nearly a kilometer-long frontage of open space and lines of acacia seedlings pop out. That is the contrast that the new Marilao mall has provided to the jumbled neighborhood. In a country bereft of parks, the malls have become air-conditioned Lunetas.

Despite being set in a hick town, the computerized point-of-sale terminals of the new mall have the latest, cutting-edge technology. The rows of POS terminals lining up the SM Hypermart all have flat LCD screens, a technological leap for a town whose fringes are still dotted with rice farms and chickens roaming the fields.

On the macroeconomic level, the POS terminals are heaven-sent to revenue-strapped government taxmen. These machines channel to the formal, taxable economy what had hitherto been confined within the underground, talipapa economy.

All those previously unreported rural spending and OFW manna will now be sucked by the mall's supermarket, shops, and fast foods whose computerized records, unlike the cash boxes of cornerstore groceries and sari-sari stores, may now be counterchecked by the BIR and city hall.

No wonder then that Marilao Mayor Leoncio Duran Jr. was elated by the mall opening. Not only did he get an urban renewal project for free, the mayor can look forward to a wider tax base, a larger budget, and a bigger war chest.

Roco's dark side

RAUL Roco preaches transparency and corporate governance. But his law firm has once again run afoul with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Roco's partner, Lorna Kapunan, who is vice president for legal affairs of the Baguio Country Club, and Roco's junior lawyers rammed through a stockholders' meeting of the BCC on Nov. 6 despite an order from the SEC resetting it for Nov. 28.

The SEC had been aghast to discover that more than half of the management proxies being kept by Kapunan and corporate secretary Victoria de los Reyes were either blank, filled in pencil, or had no corresponding validation.

To ensure that no foul play would be committed, the SEC ordered a resetting of the meeting to Nov. 28, so that all contending parties would have time to revalidate the proxies and at least agree on the validity of the ballots.

What do you know? Despite the presence of an SEC team from Manila, the BCC lawyers, prompted by BCC chair Rep. Rodolfo Albano, and BCC president, ex-Philippine Bar Association president Federico Agcaoili, pushed through with the meeting and re-elected themselves using the questioned proxies.

With their patience again taxed, SEC Chair Lilia Bautista and the three other female commissioners last week nullified the Nov. 6 amendment transforming the club into a nonstock corporation while another stockholders' suit is being prepared to question the validity of the same meeting.

Only the lone male member, Brother Eddie Villanueva's nominee, Jesus Enrique Martinez, cast the lone dissenting vote among the SEC commissioners.

Danding's fingerprints

THE PR consultants used by San Miguel president Ramon Ang in his fight with the Supreme Court over the CyberBay-Amari issue were all over the Manila Hotel during actor Fernando Poe Jr.'s announcement of his presidential candidacy.

And so was San Miguel director, Danding booster Carmelo Santiago of the Melo's steakhouse fame.

Heard through the grapevine

DOÑA Chito Madrigal's favorite nephew-in-law, investment banker Jose Armando Eduque, has been issued a hold-departure order by Makati RTC Judge Rebecca Mariano as a result of the estafa case filed by the unpaid investors of the failed East Asia Capital.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Chinese firm expresses interest to reopen National Steel plant

By Michelle V. Remo

ANOTHER foreign company, this time from China, has expressed interest to reopen the mothballed National Steel Corp., Iligan City Mayor Franklin Quijano has announced.

Quijano, without identifying the Chinese firm, said in press briefing last week that the Chinese firm was hoping it would still be entertained by the banks and the government despite failing to submit a bid before the Sept. 30 deadline.

The firm, according to Quijano, was willing to hold serious discussions with the government and the creditor-banks of NSC should their talks with the other foreign bidder, Global Infrastructure Holdings Ltd., fail.

NSC creditor-banks, headed by Philippine National Bank, have granted a 90-day exclusive talks with GIHL after the latter submitted a bid price of P13 billion, which was higher than the P7 billion of the only other bidder, LNM Holdings.

Quijano said the government was not closing its doors on the other parties interested to run NSC, whose steel plant is located in Iligan City.

He said, however, that creditor-banks could not promise greater chances for the two other interested parties because talks with GIHL were running smoothly so far. He added that the government and the banks wanted NSC to be reopened as soon as possible.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II earlier said the government expected NSC's rehabilitation to begin as early as March 2004 should creditor-banks and GIHL sign a deal within the 90-day period that started two weeks ago.

The local government of Iligan, Quijano said, has promised to write off part of the P600 million in real property tax owed by NSC to the Iligan City government to help hasten NSC's reopening.

However, Quijano said the local government wanted to ensure that the winning bidder would be dedicated to run NSC for the long term, and that it would invest sufficient amount for the rehabilitation of its facilities.

"We don't want to be writing off debt only to find out later that the plant will close down after a year or two of operations," he said.

As the Chinese firm entered the picture, LNM Holdings said it was willing to improve its P7-billion offer should the talks with GIHL fail.

LNM operations manager Eric Tiere said in a recent press briefing the company was willing to transform the profit-sharing scheme included in its bid into an amount that could be added to its original P7-billion offer.

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	STANDARD INSURANCE (Consolidated with Subsidiary)	ZURICH GEN. PHIL.
Net Premiums	Php 1,104,302,474	Php 804,833,012
Premiums Retained	Php 1,075,893,211	Php 128,703,083
Net Underwriting Income	Php 371,407,324	Php 110,133,415
Net Income After Tax	Php 109,572,288	Php 95,300,075
Total Assets	Php 1,751,632,255	Php 1,802,959,561
Total Liabilities	Php 864,742,065	Php 1,392,590,014
Total Stockholders' Equity	Php 886,890,190	Php 410,369,547
Paid Up Capital Stock	Php 500,000,000	Php 250,000,000
Contributed Surplus	Php 3,903,740	Php 50,000,000
Fluctuation for Stocks & Bonds	Php (41,564,173)	Php (8,484,691)
Retained Earnings	Php 424,550,623	Php 118,854,238

EXTERNAL AUDITORS: SyCip Gorres Velayo & Co. Joaquin Cunanan & Co.

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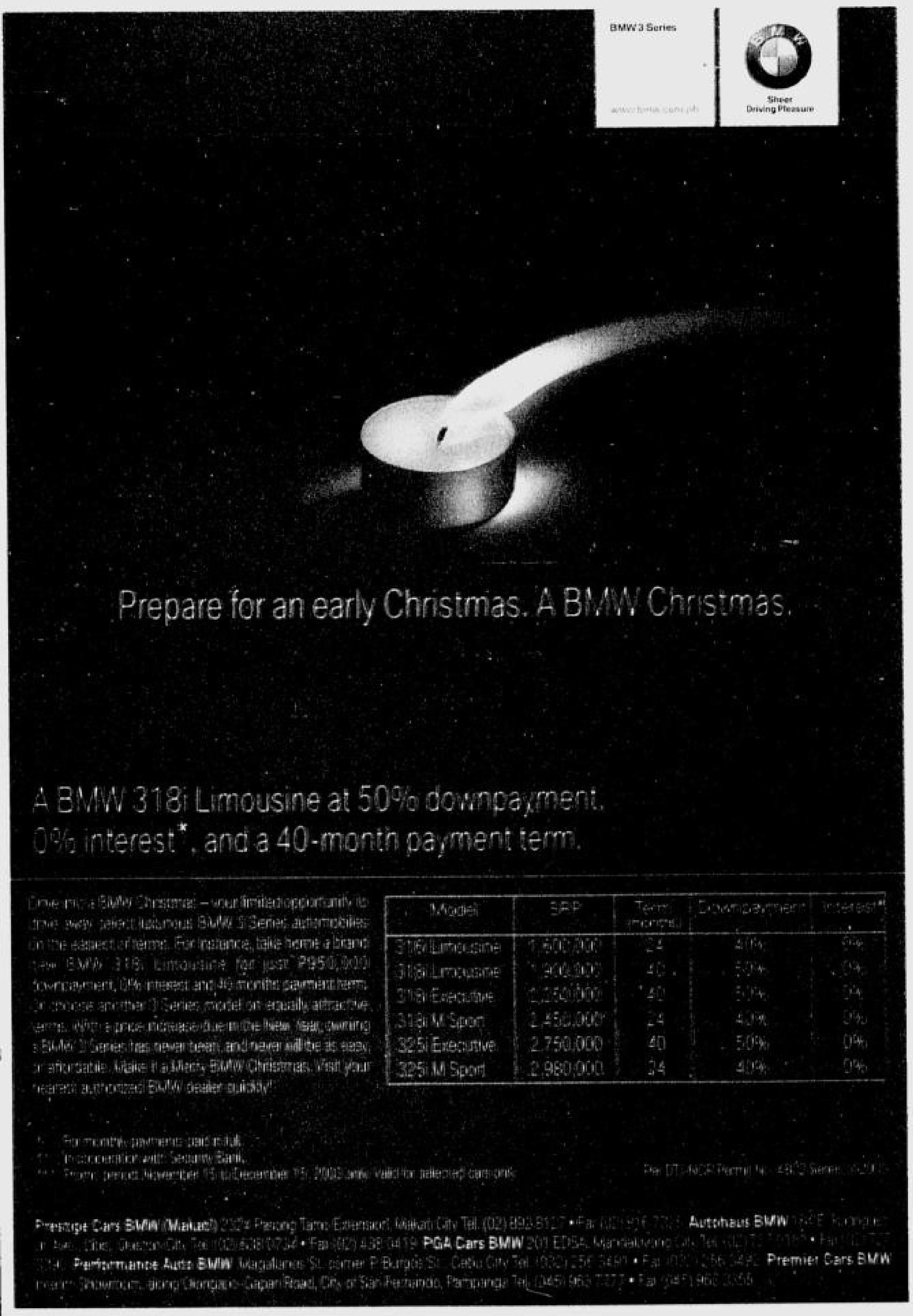
Financial Adviser

On the closing date of November 30, 2003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318i M Sport	2,450,000	24	40%	0%
325i Executive	2,750,000	40	50%	0%
325i M Sport	2,980,000	24	40%	0%

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Petron bags fuel supply contracts worth ₱1.1B

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NATIONAL Power Corp. has awarded oil giant Petron Corp. two supply contracts worth about P1.1 billion for the fuel needs of two oil-fired power plants.

In an interview, a Napocor official said the contracts were awarded to Petron after the power firm's board of directors reviewed the results of the bidding conducted in November.

The contracts covered additional industrial fuel oil (IFO) supplies needed to run the 620-megawatt combined cycle power plant in Limay Bataan and the 108-MW Subic plant in Zambales for the remainder of the year.

The Bataan contract covers the supply and delivery of 91,547 kiloliters of IFO while the Subic contract calls for 12,535 kiloliters.

Napocor has a budget of P1.05 billion for Bataan and P137.9 million for Subic.

"The actual value of the contracts are lower than the approved budgets and the original bids of Petron," the official said.

The source explained that since Petron was the only qualified bidder that submitted bids, Napocor negotiated for further discounts which the oil firm granted.

The official was unable to give specifics as the information were not available at press time.

Also last month, Napocor bid out five more contracts worth a total of about P803 million.

Bidding officials said Petron submitted the best bids for four contracts while Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. offered the best bid for one.

However, the official said the Napocor management had not finalized post bidding evaluation.

Next week, the state firm is auctioning off contracts worth a total of about P9.77 billion for the fuel supply needs of its oil-based power plants and barges in 2004.

The contracts call for the supply and delivery of a total of 73,513 kiloliters of diesel to 28 delivery plants and barges all over the country.

They also call for supplies of 721,613 kiloliters of industrial fuel oil (IFO) to 21 power plants and barges.

The bellyaching band of BANGON!

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE AD on the centerfolds of the major dailies last week that launched a movement called BANGON! was a masterpiece of bellyaching.

The ad lists four causes of the supposed collapse of the Filipino dream for greatness. First, the leadership since Spanish times in subservience to foreign interests failed miserably by ignoring the masses. Second, our population streaked from just 16 million to 82 million today; we cannot adequately feed as estimated 35-40 million already groveling in hunger. Third, our neo-liberal free trade, free enterprise economy drawn mindlessly from America and Europe has come apart. Fourth, the elite dismally failed to educate our citizenry; it failed to give the Filipino the tools, the opportunity to acquire knowledge, advanced factory methods.

As to the first cause, why keep on bellyaching about our colonial past? Those days are long gone. As to the second, if there are too many Filipinos to feed, we just have to find ways of producing cheaper food.

For now, I will skip the third cause. As to the fourth, we have the widest educational system around; public schools up to high school are free. We are the third largest English speaking country, next to the US and the UK. We have the highest literacy rate in Asia next to Japan.

BANGON bellyaches that 2,700 flee the country every day. This is not the same as East Germans crashing through the Berlin wall to freedom in the West. The Filipinos who go abroad to work (including my son and two daughters) compete successfully for jobs. Almost all of them are professionals and technicians. Then they send back $7.5 billion in fresh money every year to be spent in groceries and supermarkets. They buy cars, homes and keep the economy moving. They do the Philippines proud.

And what is the solution offered by BANGON!? Nationalism or love of country. Government intervention. No foreigners, free market, trade liberalization or globalization.

Which brings me to the third cause: our free trade, free enterprise economy drawn mindlessly from America and Europe has come apart.

The Philippine insurance industry is a good case to study. After World War II, insurance companies sprung up like mushrooms. By the early 1960s, the industry was considered overcrowded. Malacañang banned the licensing of new companies, local or foreign.

At the same time, the insurance cartel, which fixed the prices of fire, motor car and inter-island marine insurance, and which had existed for decades, was legitimized. The cartel became the only one in history with a government license. This was the height of government intervention in the insurance business.

Then, in 1994, the insurance industry was liberalized. Foreign companies could come in by any of three doors: put up a wholly owned subsidiary, open a full-fledged branch, or buy into a domestic company. Almost overnight, some of the largest life companies from the US, UK, Europe and Japan came in. The number of companies doubled. There were fewer non-life companies that accepted the invitation, which goes to show that a foreigner does not come in just because the door is open.

At any rate, the initial effect of liberalization was to bring in the equivalent of P5 billion in new investments.

At the same time the insurance cartel was broker up. The license was withdrawn and each company was now free to set its own selling prices.

Today, nine years later, in the bright and sunlit uplands of a free and open market, the insurance industry is as vigorous as it has never been before.

The consumer benefits most of all. There is a dizzying array of new products, especially in life insurance, to choose from at competitive prices. The price of a simple fire insurance policy on a house is about one-third what it used to be.

BANGON! sounds protectionist to me. If I am right, will somebody explain to me why chicken raised outside Manila and sold in open-air public markets costs more than chicken imported from the US, Australia, and even Thailand, and sold in air-conditioned supermarkets? As a result, local chicken raisers enjoy a 40-percent tariff protection at the expense of the Filipino consumer.

Will somebody explain to me why it is nationalistic to manufacture and sell a local product at a price higher than the imported variety. And treasonous for a Filipino consumer to buy the cheaper imported product, such as corned beef from Argentina.

If local producers have to be protected, why is the Filipino consumer paying for that protection by way of higher prices?

Sure, this country is faced with huge problems, not the least of which is graft and corruption. But globalization or trade liberalization is not one of them. And this country will do better with less bellyaching.

NFA intensifies palay buying

THE NATIONAL Food Authority has allocated P3.7 billion to finance an aggressive palay buying operations as harvests peaked this quarter, NFA Administrator Arthur Yap said.

Yap has instructed NFA field offices to intensify buying operations and ordered the deployment of additional mobile buying teams in main palay production areas in the country. At present, there are 500 teams serving remote areas.

"These procurement teams have also been ordered to go all-out in buying the produce of the farmers even beyond regular office hours," he said.

Reacting to reports that palay prices were going down, Yap said the NFA, through its aggressive buying operations, had been pushin prices up.

He admitted that there were some cases when farmers were unable to avail themselves of the services offered by the NFA.

Farmer organizations who wish to avail of the procurement services of the NFA but are constrained by their limited resources are advised to coordinate with the nearest office of the agency in their respective localities through TXT-NFA at mobile phone number 09176210927.

Yap said that based on the NFA's monitoring and survey on farmers, farmers' cooperatives and private grains traders, the average buying price for clean and dry palay in Nueva Ecija is P9.05 per kg, which approximates the NFA's buying price of P9.00 per kg, plus P0.50 in incentives. In Palawan, clean and dry palay fetches between P7.80 and P8.20 per kg. *Christine A. Gaylican*

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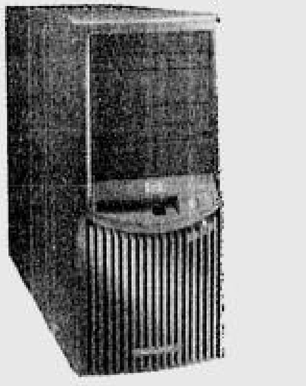

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The Presidency and the economy

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

WHY should the question of who might emerge as our country's next President matter so much to our currency and stock markets? How could the exchange rate and the stock market index react so swiftly and so negatively to the announcement of the candidacy of Mr. Fernando Poe Jr., for example?

Of course, the market players and those who watch these markets need no explanation. They talk of increased "political risk." But for the rest of us, it may not be such a trivial question to ask why indeed it should matter to the economy who will become our next President. After all, one might argue, our economic life will go on no matter what. Filipinos are well-acknowledged to be quite resilient even through the worst of times. And after last week's positive economic growth numbers reported by the government, despite all the social and political turmoil we are going through, some might ask: why worry? It seems that the Philippine economy will manage, no matter what. We will muddle through.

No perfect President

But that's precisely our problem. Muddling through is simply not good enough. We have been muddling through for much too long. We cannot afford to be simply muddling through when those around us are speeding right ahead past us. Thailand, the country that started the Asian financial crisis and suffered among its worst setbacks has come back with a vengeance. For this, most observers give primary credit to their current leader, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Here is a prime example of a leader who, in spite of much political baggage including allegations of corruption, is still able to rally his country to a spectacular recovery.

There is a message here for all of us: it's time we stopped looking for the perfect President. We should, however, make sure that the President we choose will be able to lead us well beyond simply muddling through, and into a broad-based and rapid advance of our economy and society. As a people, we should have all learned by now from past experiences with past presidents what kind of President we should not have. On this, I need not elaborate. But more importantly, we should have also learned by now what kind of attitudes we as a people should not have as well. But, as many people lament, we Filipinos are slow learners—if we learn at all.

Nationalism is the key

Many of us have read that essay making the rounds of the e-mail circuit that was written by a Korean observer, arguing that the main thing wrong with the Philippines and the Filipinos is that we don't love our country enough. Most of us don't have the same kind of love for country that drove Koreans and Thais from all walks of life to voluntarily give up their gold jewelry to the government in order to shore up their dwindling reserves at the height of the financial crisis. Filipinos, it seems to me, would never even think of doing such a thing. James Fallows wrote that Filipinos have a damaged culture. The damaged culture he was referring to could be summed up in our lack of concern for the common good.

I like to call it the Filipinos' lack of nationalism. But I do not refer to nationalism espoused by some that translates to xenophobic patriotism, despising everything foreign. I prefer to define the nationalism we lack as oneness as a nation, the lack of ability to place the common good above self-interest. We are a fragmented nation of self-centered individuals, and we know it and even laugh about it. We see it in Filipinos at home, as in motorists who inconvenience everyone else by forming a new counterflow lane rather than wait for their turn. We see it in Filipinos abroad, as in the way many overseas Filipino organizations split up repeatedly when election losers secede and form their own group. We see it in Filipinos rich or poor alike, wherever they may be.

FPJ Presidency: a disaster?

To me, the foremost quality we need in our next President is the ability to exemplify and bring about unity or oneness as a Filipino nation, i.e. nationalism of the right kind. I admired the way I was recruited into the Ramos Cabinet without anyone even bothering to ask me if I had voted for him. In contrast, I know of an extremely qualified candidate for a key position under the Estrada administration who was told outright she could not be chosen because she had failed to campaign (not just vote!) for Mr. Estrada. At times, the fallen President even appeared to be fomenting a class war, when he should have been fostering unity and harmony. That, to me, was the most "un-Presidential" of his faults.

Many people are scared of an FPJ presidency clearly because of that disastrous experience with an actor president. Mr. Poe's biggest political asset, that of being a widely-known actor, is also his biggest liability in the eyes of many--i.e. of belonging to the same profession as the fallen president. For all his presumably good intentions, FPJ's foremost challenge is to prove that he will be everything Mr. Estrada was not. He need not convince us that his values are different from Mr. Estrada's; most people give him credit for that. But he needs to disabuse us of the common perception that he will be easily subject to manipulation or machinations by people with the wrong motivations for gaining power. That seems to be the main thing that leads people to believe that an FPJ presidency will lead us to disaster.

But to those who declare that they would give up hope in the country and migrate to another country in the event of a Poe presidency, I say, think again. To my mind, those who seriously think of "bailing out" if a President not to their liking is elected (and I am quite sure there is a sizable number among us who do) are very much part, if not a primary cause, of our nation's problems. Citizenship is not a privilege; it is a responsibility. A good President is vital for a good economy. But so are responsible citizens working selflessly for the common good.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

Gov't lost ₱40B due to failure to reclassify old cigarette brands

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT has lost some P40 billion in additional revenue due to the failure to reclassify old cigarette brands, the taxes imposed on which were no longer commensurate with their net retail prices.

Former Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, in a letter to House committee on ways and means Chair Rep. Jules Ledesma last month, said that while net retail prices of old cigarette brands had increases since 1998, the finance department could not impose higher taxes on them.

This was because the National Internal Revenue Code did not allow the reclassification of tobacco and alcohol products that were introduced in the market on and before the revised tax code was implemented in October 1996.

The law says, however, that indexation of so-called sin products for tax purposes may be done through the passage of a bill in Congress calling for such a move.

Camacho reported that for Fortune Tobacco alone, the government lost some P28 billion from the period 1999 to 2002 due to the non-reclassification of its old cigarette brands.

The government also lost P10.17 billion due to the non-reclassification of Philip Morris, and P2.5 billion due to the failure to reclassify both Sterling and Anglo brands, he added.

The estimated foregone revenue was the reason the DOF has urged Congress to pass a bill that would allow the regular indexation of alcohol and tobacco products based on changes in the net retail prices.

Particlularly, the finance department is pushing for the passage of House Bill No. 5057 and No. 4765.

While the DOF could not realize higher revenue from old cigarette brands, the Bureau of Internal Revenue meanwhile has issued revenue regulation No. 22-2003, which imposed higher taxes on new cigarette brands.

New cigarette brands, including Astro and Memphis of La Suerte Cigar and Cigarette Factory, are those introduced in the market after the implementation of the revised tax code.

Saying the increase in the taxes of new cigarette brands resulted in unfair competition, La Suerte has filed a case calling for the injunction of RR 22-2003.

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Digitel seen spending $260M for telecom expansion in 2004

By Abigail L. Ho

GOKONGWEI-OWNED Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. is looking at spending about $260 million for the maintenance and expansion of its fixed line and cellular businesses next year.

"We expect about $250 million in (capital expenditure) for wireless. Hopefully we'll get it below that, but that is the working number for the wireless business. For fixed line, it's minimal. Maybe $10 million to $12 million," Digitel president and chief executive Lance Gokongwei told reporters in a recent interview.

Digitel, through wholly owned subsidiary Digitel Mobile Philippines Inc., is expanding its cellular network by rolling out infrastructure in key areas all over the country.

Digitel Mobile is focusing on 12 areas for its rollout—the National Capital Region, Bulacan, Pampanga, Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Baguio, Cebu, Iloilo, Bacolod, Davao and Cagayan de Oro.

As of end-September, French telecommunications equipment supplier Alcatel had installed 620 cell sites and two switches for Digitel Mobile all over the country, Gokongwei said.

The Digitel group's year-to-date consolidated capex has reached more than P5 billion. Roughly 85 percent of this was spent for its wireless rollout.

Just recently, Digitel Mobile signed contracts worth $250 million with Alcatel and Ericsson for phases 3 and 4 of its wireless expansion.

Alcatel will take care of rolling out infrastructure in Luzon, while Ericsson will be in charge of putting up cell sites and other facilities in Visayas and Mindanao.

Gokongwei said these two phases of expansion would bring the number of Digitel Mobile's cell sites to 1,200 upon completion in mid-2004.

These wireless expansion efforts are funded by a combination of loans, supplier's credit and internally generated funds.

On the fixed line side, Gokongwei noted that Digitel was "basically in the cash-harvesting mode where we are making judicious investments in our fixed assets base."

"We are still in our aggressive rollout mode for our wireless business to improve our coverage and increase our critical mass of subscribers," he said.

PSE plans electronic registration system

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange is in talks with the Securities and Exchange Commission for the introduction of an electronic registration system for stock beneficiaries to prevent dealer abuses in the wake of the Asian Capital Equities Inc. scandal.

The PSE recently discovered various fraudulent trading practices allegedly committed by ACE. For instance, some of the clients' funds and shares of stock were reportedly being used by the brokerage for its own dealer position without the knowledge of the investors.

"For the defense of the beneficiaries, we would like to encourage them to have records of stocks in their names," PSE president Ernest Leung told reporters.

The usual practice at present, Leung said, was that nominees would hold the stocks on behalf of the investors when the shares were lodged with the Philippine Central Depository Inc. This developed as the exchange has moved to a scripless trading system.

As such, the stocks were usually in the names of the agents such as brokerage houses or custodian banks who would effectively act as proxies. "Any unscrupulous entity can execute that power without the knowledge of the beneficiary," Leung said.

The solution to this, the PSE president said, was to improve the clearing and settlement system of the local bourse. He said talks with the SEC were underway on an electronic registration system.

Leung said the PSE could adopt a similar model used in India whereby investors are given a choice of whether to go electronic or still receive a hard copy of stock certificates for the "old fashioned" ones.

"But you have to pay the price if you choose the hard copy," Leung said, noting that completing a stock transaction under the old-fashion system was slower compared to electronic uploading.

The PSE is seeking urgent authority to take over brokerage firm ACE, which was slapped with a cease-and-desist order by the SEC for fraud and other violations of the Securities Regulation Code.

The first provision allegedly violated was Sec. 26, which declares it unlawful to engage in anything that operates as a fraud or deceit upon any person.

Another violation cited was that of Sec. 30.2, which seeks "fair" and "honest" dealings in securities and provides financial safeguards, including the establishment of minimum capital requirements, acceptance of custody and use of securities of customers and the use of deposits/balance sheets of customers.

PLDT opens network to US telecom firm

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. said it has fully opened up its network to the United States' Sprint Communications in compliance with a government directive to speed up the resolution of rates disputes between local and US carriers.

PLDT senior vice president Alfredo Panlilio said in a statement that the company has fully unblocked all circuits connecting the PLDT network to that of Sprint's.

Panlilio said that under the present interim agreement with Sprint, the US carrier would provisionally settle all outstanding amounts and pay interim termination fees to PLDT once the US Federal Communications Commission lifted its stop-payment order on PLDT.

"We are confident that the US FCC will soon lift (the) order simply because it would be in the interest of all parties concerned," he said. "We do want to end this long-standing dispute as soon as possible so we can move on to improve our respective businesses."

He said that with continuing negotiations among carriers and the openness to reach mutually agreeable termination rates, it was expected that PLDT and other local carriers would soon fully restore normal business relations with US carriers.

In fact, PLDT and MCI Worldcom International of the United States recently reached an interim agreement on the termination rates and are now accepting calls from both networks.

The rates dispute stemmed from a US FCC order dated March 10 that allowed two US carriers to stop paying their Philippine counterparts for receiving calls from their networks.

The order was issued in response to AT&T Corp. and MCI's complaints that Philippine carriers were engaged in whipsawing, or pitting US carriers against one another to get better deals.

Last week, Globe Telecom Inc. said it had signed an interim agreement with MCI which it said would provide a basis for rates that would ease the flow of direct traffic between the Globe and MCI networks.

Stocks seen to weaken

From page B1

amid the growing political tensions, trading may have a negative tone next week," Vistan said last week.

The market, however, may see a limited downside as seasonal bargain hunters may start to accumulate the more fundamentally sound issues, Vistan said.

He pointed out that the market's weakness over the past three weeks has opened up bargains in some areas and should encouraged investors to nibble some issues. Among the more favored ones are Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., SM Prime Holdings, First Philippine Holdings and Globe Telecoms Inc.

Meanwhile, BPItrade said that investors were waiting for the platforms of the various candidates and, in the meantime, would likely stay on the sidelines to watch how the presidential race shapes up between now and January.

"The market remains vulnerable. It needs a series of good news to help lift market sentiment," BPItrade said.

Elena R. Torrijos

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of November 28, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.75	11,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	5,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	43	43.5	42.5	43	670,900
China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	19,100
Citystate Savings Bank	15	15	15	15	2,300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34	34	32.5	33	266,800
Export And Ind. Bank Inc.	0.57	0.58	0.56	0.58	240,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26	26	26	96,000
Philippine National Bank	24.25	24.25	24	24	1,900
Philippine Trust Co.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.5	93,700
Union Bank Of The Phil.	26	26	25.5	25.5	5,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Abacus Financial	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	400,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	195	200	195	195	310
Manulife Financial Corp.	1700	1715	1700	1715	950
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	127,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1330	1340	1330	1340	3,510
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	27	27	26	26	2,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.67	0.67	790,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	735	740	715	720	52,830
Ipeople Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	10,000
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	1,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.039	3,600,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.75	2.75	7,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.79	0.81	12,030,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	760	765	745	755	214,150
Ivantage Corp.	0.35	0.39	0.35	0.39	70,000
Philweb Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	2,600,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14	14	13.75	14	31,300
Manila Electric Co. B	21	21.75	21	21.75	415,800
Petron Corp.	2.1	2.12	2.08	2.1	6,601,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	205,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	10,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	31,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	6,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	18,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30.5	31	30.5	30.5	22,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	17	16.75	17	594,700
San Miguel Corp. A	53.5	54.5	53.5	54.5	22,200
San Miguel Corp. B	61	62	61	62	77,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.75	4.75	15,796,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	10,000
APC Group Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	100,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	5,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	2,040,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	640,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.038	0.04	0.038	0.04	600,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1,050,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	17.75	18	17.75	18	479,700
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	284,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.02	1.02	1	1.02	1,211,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.27	0.25	0.26	15,390,000
Music Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	240,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	200,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.0875	0.0875	0.0875	0.0875	100,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	50,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.18	36,030,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	100
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.57	0.58	0.55	0.58	4,030,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	460,000
Manila Jockey Club	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	5,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.14	0.185	0.14	0.185	260,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	879,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.3	5.4	5,870,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	15,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	300,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.12	0.125	0.12	0.12	1,240,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	950,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.02	1.06	1.02	1.06	5,650,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.18	2.22	2.18	2.22	151,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.88	0.88	40,000
SM Development Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	5,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.5	17,935,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	3,200,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	200,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	10,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	18,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	4,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	1,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	10,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	400,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	4,000,000
Pacifica	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	3,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.17	0.19	0.17	0.19	250,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,944,370	61,152,665.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	108,471,780	410,554,130.00
PRO	32,156,000	154,920,650.00
Mining	36,810,000	1,174,400.00
OIL	7,250,000	84,350.00
GRAND TOTALS :	186,632,150	627,886,195.00

AVERAGES		
Bank & Fin Svc	416.86	DOWN 4.20
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,962.11	DOWN 6.89
PRO	543.45	UP 0.21
Mining	1,610.22	DOWN 32.76
OIL	1.33	UP 0.02
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	836.35	UP 3.11
Composite	1,313.87	DOWN 5.55

NO. OF ADVANCES: 23; NO. OF DECLINES: 27; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 37; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 87; NO. OF TRADES: 1,539

CURRENCIES

November 30, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.837170364	1.000000	55.767000
Japan	Yen	0.007682	0.009176	0.511700
United Kingdom	Pound	1.434157	1.713100	95.534400
Hongkong	Dollar	0.107794	0.128760	7.180600
Switzerland	Franc	0.648015	0.774054	43.166700
Canada	Dollar	0.642495	0.767460	42.798900
Singapore	Dollar	0.486049	0.580585	32.377500
Australia	Dollar	0.605942	0.723798	40.364000
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.232455	2.666667	148.712000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.223227	0.266645	14.870000
Brunei	Dollar	0.484642	0.578905	32.283800
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000099	0.000118	0.006600
Thailand	Baht	0.020992	0.025075	1.398400
UAE	Dirham	0.227944	0.272279	15.184200
Euro	Euro	1	1.194500	66.613700
ArgentinaPeso	0.284269	0.339559	18.936200	
Brazil	REAL	0.284558	0.339905	18.955500
Denmark	Kroner	0.134394	0.160534	8.952500
India	Rupee	0.018267	0.021820	1.216800
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220337	0.263193	14.677500
Mexico	New Peso	0.073734	0.088075	4.911700
New Zealand	Dollar	0.536785	0.641190	35.757200
Norway	Kroner	0.122455	0.146272	8.157200
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014661	0.017513	0.976600
South Africa	Rand	0.130553	0.155945	8.696600
Korea	Won	0.000697	0.000832	0.046400
Sweden	Kroner	0.110906	0.132477	7.387800
Syria	Pound	0.016255	0.019417	1.082800
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024565	0.029343	1.636400
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000525	0.000627	0.035000

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G & W clubshares
SEC License Broker No.: A-17597
As of December 1, 2003

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,300,000	1,100,000
Baguio Country Club	750,000	650,000
Canyon Woods	160,000	100,000
Camp John Hay	-	200,000
Capitol Hills	170,000	150,000
Calatagan Golf Club A/B**	70,000/Pls. Call	-
Cebu Country Club	-	1,230,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	150,000
Club Filipino	140,000	140,000
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	300,000/450,000**	-
Eastridge	100,000	-
Evercrest	100,000	-
Fontana D/C*/A**	70,000/140,000*/230,000**	-
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	190,000/220,000*/250,000**	190,000**
Manila Golf Ind./Corp.*	10,700,000/11,500,000*	-
Manila Polo		2,200,000
Manila Yacht Club	550,000	-
Manila Southwoods A/B*	420,000/500,000*	.500,000*
Metropolitan Club	100,000	-
Mimosa Golf Ind./Corp.*	102,300	110,000/250,000*
Mt. Malarayat Ind./Corp.*	230,000	-
Phil. Columbian	60,000	-
Puerto Azul A/B	100,000/150,000*	-
Punta Fuego	-	400,000
Quezon City Sports Club A	-	165,000
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	140,000/165,000*/380,000**	-
Rockwell Leisure Club*	360,000	-
Royale Tagaytay A/C*	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Sherwoods A/B*/C**	70,000/Pls. Call*	-
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	1,300,000/1,650,000*	-
Subic Bay Yacht Club (Corp.)	150,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	370,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	-
Tel Filipinas A	-	130,000
Valley Golf & CC	300,000	250,000

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GG & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007575 * As of December 1, 2003

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,100,000	1,300,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,400,000
Baguio Country Club	650,000	680,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	60,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	70,000
Camp John Hay	200,000	220,000
Canlubang	400,000	450,000
Canyonwoods	-	150,000
Capitol Hills	150,000	170,000
Cebu Country Club	1,200,000	Please Call
Celebrity Sports Club	160,000	200,000
Club Filipino	120,000	160,000
Eagleridge "C"	-	340,000
Evercrest "A"	-	80,000
Forest Hills "A"	150,000	170,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	230,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	220,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	10,800,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	9,500,000	10,100,000
Manila Polo	2,300,000	Please Call
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	400,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	500,000	550,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	400,000
Metroclub "A"	-	100,000
Mimosa (Individual)	110,000	170,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	275,000
Montemar (Corporate)	35,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	200,000	250,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	300,000	350,000
Puerto Azul	-	100,000
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	175,000
Rockwell	-	380,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	80,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	180,000
Spa & Lodge	600,000	800,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,000,000	1,250,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	220,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	370,000
Tagaytay Highlands	800,000	830,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	700,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	140,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	250,000
Valley Golf	250,000	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,000,000	7,000,000

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CLUBS	SELLING AT	CLUBS	SELLING AT	CLUBS	BUYING AT
ALABANG "A"	1.7M	PUNTA FUEGO	500K	CC @ TAG	330K
ALABANG "B"	1.450M	CC SPORTS "A"	200K	FOREST HILLS "A"	150K
BAGUIO CC	660K	RIVIERA G & CC "A"	165K	MLA POLO	2.225M
CELEBRITY (IND)	175K	ROCKWELL	350K	ORCHARD "A"	Call now
CC@ TAGAYTAY	380K	S'WOODS "A"	470K	RIVIERA CC	Call now
EAGLE RIDGE "B"	Call now	STA. ELENA "A"	1.4M	S'WOODS "B"	500K
FOREST HILLS "A"	200K	SUBIC BAY YACHT	120K	STA. ELENA "B"	1.3M
MLA GOLF (IND)	10M	TAG MIDLANDS	750K	TAG HLANDS	Call now
MLA POLO	Call now	VALLEY GOLF	300K	TAG MIDLANDS	650K

PARTIAL AVAILABLE LESSORS FOR PLAYING RIGHTS

ALABANG CC "A"	25,000	STA. ELENA "A"	Call now
CANLUBANG	50,000	TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	35,000
MIMOSA GOLF & CC	10,000	TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	30,000
RIVIERA GCC	10,000	WACK WACK	90,000

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ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	-	1.1M
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1.3M	please call
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	-	650K
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB "B"	60K	-
CAPITOL HILLS GOLF CLUB	155K	-
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	170K	-
COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY	360K	please call
EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	80K	-
EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "B"	-	please call
EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "B"	280K	-
EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	85K	-
FONTANA "D"	50K	please call
FOREST HILLS "C"	250K	-
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	200K	please call
MANILA GOLF CLUB (Ind.)	please call	please call
MANILA GOLF CLUB (Corp.)	11M	please call
MANILA POLO CLUB	please call	2.3M
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	450K	-
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	600K	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	230K	180K
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	175K	please call
ROCKWELL CLUB	350K	-
ROYALE TAGAYTAY	please call	-
RIVIERA GOLF CLUB	120K	-
SHERWOOD HILLS "B"	-	110K
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	-	1.0M
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	680K	-
VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB-IND.	-	130K
VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB-CORP.	-	200K
VALLEY GOLF CLUB	260K	250K
WACK WACK GOLF CLUB	7.2M	6.350M

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clubshares
As of Dec 1, 2003

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Camp John Hay	-	pls. call
Canlubang	-	450,000
Orchard "C"	-	265,000
Evercrest	-	50,000
Fairways Blue Water	-	150,000
Fontana "D"	-	50,000
Fantasy World	-	175,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	230,000
Manila Polo	2,250,000	-
Mla. Southwoods	-	350,000
Phil. Columbian	-	90,000
Montemar	-	35,000
Punta Fuego	-	400,000
Quezon City Sports Club	-	175,000
Riviera "A"	-	100,000
Riviera "B"	-	140,000
Rockwell Club	-	350,000
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Canadian driller raising $2.7M to develop Cebu field

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A CANADIAN petroleum firm said it was planning to raise $2.7 million (about P148 million) for the development of a natural gas field discovered recently in northern Cebu.

Larry Youell, president and chief executive of Forum Energy Corp., said in a statement the company was in talks with certain investors to complete a possible private placement and issuance of convertible notes to raise the amount.

"The private placement will likely consist of up to 8 million units at $0.25, with each consisting of one share and one two-year share-purchase warrant, as well as up to $700,000 of five-year, 8-percent convertible notes," Youell said.

The official explained that the notes could be converted into FEC shares at $0.26 per share.

Youel said earlier that the Nasdaq-listed company had also listed on the Berlin and Frankfurt stock exchanges following a growth of interest in FEC due to promising exploration activities in the Philippines.

"The proceeds (of the private placement) would be used as further working capital and for the development of the Maya Gas Field," he said.

During open hole testing in October on the Forum-2X exploration well, FEC's local unit Forum Exploration Inc. reported a gas flow of 217,000 standard cubic feet a day.

Last week, the Department of Energy said FEI was preparing for wireline logging activities in the recently drilled Forum-3X well.

"Once logging is completed we will be able to provide a revised estimate on the overall potential reserves of the Maya field," Youell said.

He added that before Forum-3X was drilled, estimates were pegged at 3.86 million barrels of oil and 14 cubic feet of gas, "with upside potential for addition to reserves as we conduct further exploration of the area."

Youell had said FEI drillings have shown indications of a significant gas reserve inland of Cebu, with commercial potential to contribute to the growing power and energy needs of the province.

FEI is the sole operator of Service Contract No. 40, which covers the northern half of Cebu Island and a large section of the Visayan Sea.

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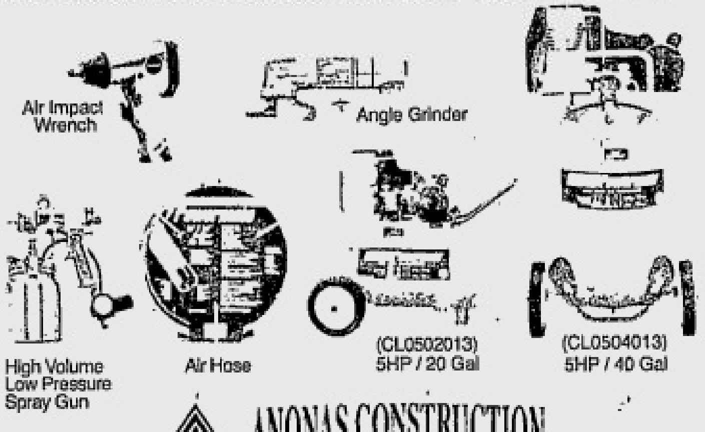

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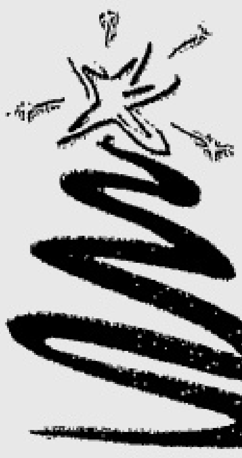

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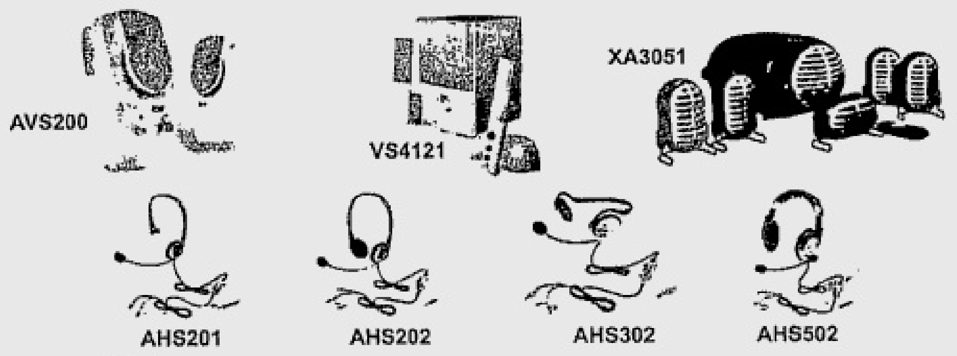

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BSP sees peso stabilizing at 55-$1 this month

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas sees the peso improving to 55 to $1 this month on expectation that the increasing dollar inflow from overseas Filipino workers will offset the pressure on the currency brought about by political uncertainties.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said that with the volatile political landscape aggravated by weak exports, the central bank would embark on a comprehensive review of the country's economic targets for 2004 to determine the realistic levels of exchange rate, dollar reserves, external payments and economic growth next year.

"All the numbers for next year have to be reviewed especially in the context of export growth. We have to get a good handle of the exports to determine the appropriate level of the peso, the reserves, current account and balance-of-payments. Exports also affect the level of GDP growth," said the BSP chief in an interview.

Political uncertainties have driven away foreign direct investors this year and the trend is expected to continue in the coming year, according to the central bank governor.

"We are not banking much on FDIs although we could still see some portfolio investments coming in. We have about $500 million this year so I think we will have the same next year. What is also important to watch out for is the economic growth in the United States and whether we will benefit from it," said Buenaventura.

The BSP is set to meet with exporters either this month or next to firm up the export numbers for 2004.

"I think the peso will improve this month because we are seeing dollars coming in from overseas workers. I don't think we will have any more surprises from now until the end of the year," said the BSP chief.

Buenaventura agreed with currency traders that the peso would be range-bound for this week as banks and investors wait for the smoke to clear before taking any position.

The peso closed at a fresh all-time low of 55.73 last Friday although the trading ranged only from 55.72 to 55.74. The day before that, it fell to a historic low of 55.85, largely in reaction to Fernando Poe Jr.'s announcement of his candidacy, but closed at 55.69.

While traders said sentiment could deteriorate anew once politicians file their candidacies, Buenaventura said the increasing certainty of who would run in the coming elections should diminish the risks, particularly when presidential candidates start laying down their economic platform.

A government source said that political noise could weaken the local currency by at least a peso in the months leading to the May presidential polls.

Traders said the 56-$1 level is just several notches away and could be easily breached with another major political development.

In the last two weeks, the peso had reacted strongly to the resignation of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho effective, a warning from Moody's Investors Service that it could downgrade the country's credit rating and Poe's declaration of his presidential bid.

Even typhoons don't come anymore

By Miguel del Rosario

COMMENTARY

LAST Nov. 21, I was again a participant in the annual Senior Management Conference sponsored by Thailand's largest conglomerate, The Siam Cement Group. The morning was divided into two parts—the first being the presentation of the Asian growth outlook, while the second was the traditional annual performance reporting of the group by Siam Cement Corp. president Chumpol Nalamlieng.

Let me give you a snapshot of Mr. Chumpol's report before I dwell on my main text. Without going to specifics, The Siam Cement Group, together with its subsidiaries, has survived the long drawn Asian financial crisis, as it is now out of the red and is poised to take on more challenges for further expansion. The current year will the group profits ,far greater than pre-crisis levels of 1996; they are now stronger than ever! And this is not the only company in Thailand that can proudly claim that they are out of the woods. This is a reason to be really jealous.

Asian growth outlook

The earlier part of the morning was the presentation of the region's economic outlook by leading economist Dr. James Walker. Dr. Walker specializes on the economies of Asia, particularly that of the Asean region. This gentleman gathered statistics from 1943 to 2003 establishing trends and patterns of economic development from Japan, China, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and our other neighbors.

Some of the items he mentioned were the similarities of the economic development patterns in Japan from 1943 to 1979 and in China from 1990 to 2003. He also took note of Korea on its way to being a powerhouse in two to three years. And of course China, with more policy reforms implemented in the last two years, is now even more competitive and investor-friendly. Dr. Walker also said that with the minimal growth in the US, EU and Japan, the net beneficiaries in terms of growth would be the Asean region as evidenced by the indicators he had gathered. According to Dr. Walker, the Asean region is looking good in the next three to four years unfortunately with the exception of two countries—Indonesia and the Philippines. At this point, admittedly, I wanted to hide under my seat for obvious reasons.

Laggard in Asia

Among the many power point slides he presented was the Index on Asian Consumption Trends. The table showed general improvements in consumption for the period between February 2003 and November 2003, with China, Taiwan, India, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Hong Kong all showing improvements in consumption. Only two countries showed reduced consumption, Thailand from a score of +8 to +6 and the Philippines from 0 to -4.

And to think that in Dr. Walker's successive slide, he showed Thailand with a predicted GDP of 8.1 percent and domestic demand growth of 10.6 percent for 2004.

However, it also showed that the Philippines will only have 4.2 percent GDP and Domestic Demand Growth of only 2.8 percent.

For Dr. Walker, there are two countries of great concern, Indonesia and the Philippines. Both are plagued with political uncertainties and corruption, he even characterized the Philippines as on its way to a collision course.

During the break, I found myself with Edwin Coseteng trying to enlighten Dr. Walker with the reforms the government had been undertaking, we were trying to control the damage. But damage has been done, and this is our image from the outside. I don't need to dwell further, I think I have gotten my point across; we are in very deep trouble! And I don't blame anyone else but the leadership and the politicians of our country.

Sick political culture

The whole political culture is sick, maybe I shouldn't generalize. Unfortunately, I have yet to meet a person who has a kind word to say about our politicians, the very leaders of our one and only country. Our leaders and government officials are simply not leaders, they are not statesmen. This is the perception and perception is truth. Dr. Walker said that in 1943 the Philippines was richer than Japan. He says he hasn't seen a country that has successfully driven itself to being one of the poorest countries in just about 50 years.

No wonder foreign investments have almost trickled to a halt, tourism is down, the quality of tourists that come are of questionable character. It is so sad, haven't you noticed, even typhoons don't come anymore!

(The author is vice president for marketing of United Pulp and Paper Co., which was recently acquired by the Siam Cement Group from Phinma.)

Microsoft sees 10% growth

By Abigail L. Ho

MICROSOFT Philippines, the local arm of software giant Microsoft Corp., sees a 10-percent growth in revenue for fiscal year ending June 2004. For the first half of its current fiscal year, incoming Microsoft Philippines managing director Antonio Javier said.

In a briefing over the weekend, Javier said that the company had likewise posted a 10-percent increase in revenue in the past year.

"We are very much pleased with the growth figures, considering that the market condition remains tough. We actually see a stronger showing but with this being an election year, we decided to adopt a more conservative figure," he said.

He attributed the revenue growth to the 57-percent performance improvement in the enterprise space, covering large corporate clients.

From July up to the present, the company had forged four new enterprise agreements with new clients, including SPI, Luen Thai, Pag-Ibig Fund and Philamlife.

Javier noted that the number of enterprise agreements served as a barometer for the company's overall performance.

These agreements are usually slightly long term in nature, lasting for at least three years.

Microsoft Philippines has its share of business across several sectors, including services, finance, manufacturing, media, telecommunications and retail.

Research and consultancy firm Accenture is currently using Microsoft technology for its internal applications.

The company also provided the regulatory compliance solution for Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reports to be handed out by East West Bank as well as remittance services solutions for the Philippine National Bank.

GMA Network Inc. is using some mobility solutions through Microsoft's Office System, while rival ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. has deployed the software provider's enterprise management solution.

Just last Friday, Microsoft's MSN announced a partnership with dominant carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. for the local version of the MSN portal.

For the second half of its fiscal year, Microsoft Philippines will focus on improving its relationships with its partners and customers.

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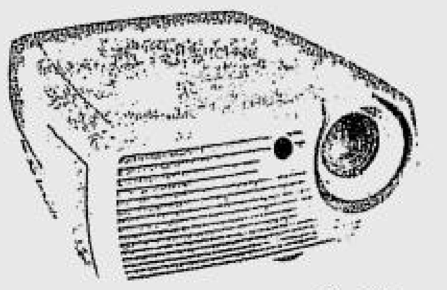

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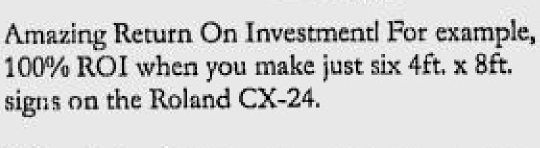

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Gov't saves ₱10B in interest payments

By Clarissa S. Batino

DESPITE rising interest rates following the July 27 failed military uprising, the government managed to register almost P10 billion in interest payment savings in the first 10 months of the year, the Bureau of Treasury said.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said that from January to October, the government was able to save P9.9 billion in interest payments on foreign and domestic borrowings.

For this year, the government had set aside P230.7 billion for interest payments but it was banking on favorable domestic rates to bring the level down.

A better grip on the fiscal sector allowed the government to contain the budget deficit at P163.88 billion or roughly P8 billion lower than the target in the first 10 months.

Edeza said that despite political uncertainties that could have pushed domestic interest rates up, the cost of government borrowings from the local market had remained reasonable.

The benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate used by banks in pricing loans crossed the 6-percent mark and averaged at 6.532 percent a week ago from 5.966 percent a month ago. Still, the bellwether rate is much lower than the government's program of 8-9 percent.

Edeza credited the government's ability to keep the budget deficit in check for the savings. As of August, the savings stood at P7 billion when the three-month treasury rate was only at about 5.6 percent.

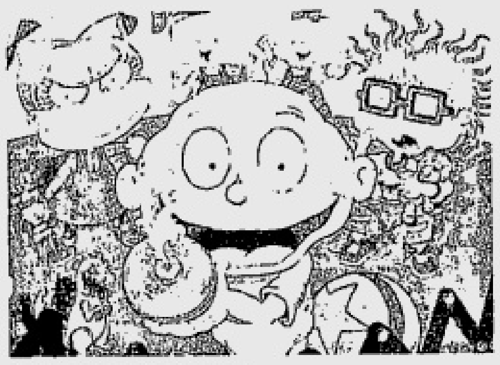
Savings from interest payments are usually used to offset increases in spending. Spending during the first 10 months have already exceeded the target by 4 percent.

Domestic interest rates were volatile in the first quarter due to external and internal concerns like the US-Iraq war, a weak peso and the imposition of the 10 percent value-added tax on financial services that sow confusion among market players.

By the second quarter, however, rates started to soften until banks started asking for a higher rates on their placements following the July 27 failed mutiny and political concerns.

NBI steps up drive vs illegal use of Nickelodeon characters

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.


RUGRATS characters

AMERICAN entertainment giant Viacom is swooping down on Philippine companies that are using its high-rating Nickelodeon characters such as "Blues Clues" and "Rugrats" to sell their wares without consent.

Viacom, through its Philippine legal counsel Escaño and Partners, had asked the National Bureau of Investigation's Intellectual Property Rights Division (NBI-IPRD) to step up its clamp-down on illegal users of its Nickelodeon characters used in selling a wide array of products from books to shirts to novelty cakes.

Viacom had sought the help of the NBI IPRD to probe the alleged rampant violation of its intellectual property rights, through the illegal and unauthorized use of its popular cartoon characters.

Armed with a search and seizure order issued by Judge Antonio M. Eugenio, Jr. of the Manila Regional Trial Court's Branch 24, the NBI team raided and seized from the head office of Art Cakes Inc. in San Juan, several sacks of documents allegedly detailing cake transactions, photographs, catalogs, pieces of cookies bearing the "Blues Clues" design.

Lawyer Eduardo C. Escaño said Art Cakes was already given a prior written demand to cease and desist from using the character "Blue."

But Art Cakes disregarded the demand and continued with its operations, prompting counsel for Viacom to request assistance from the NBI in investigating the matter. In particular, Viacom requested the NBI to investigate Art Cakes for allegedly using characters like Blue as designs on its cake products without appropriate license in violation of Section 216 of Republic Act No. 8293 or the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

Through a surveillance and test buy operation led by NBI agent Christopher Hernandez, it was established via cake order forms, official receipts and photographs that Art Cakes' outlets in A. Mabini St., San Juan, Shangri-la Mall in Mandaluyong, Glorietta-Makati and SM City, North Edsa were selling cakes bearing the Blue character design.

Based on the evidence presented by the NBI, Judge Eugenio said there was probable cause to believe that a violation of the IP Code is being committed as he ordered that cakes and pastries bearing the image of Blue, including cake moulds, computers, receipts, tags, labels, boxes and other paraphernalia used by Art Cakes in producing products with the image of Blue be seized and placed under court custody.

Viacom said the raid on Art Cakes was part of its continuing efforts to crack down on the illegal use and proliferation of counterfeit goods bearing its popular cartoon characters.

Insular extends ₱1B in loans

By Elena R. Torrijos

INSULAR Life recently extended a term loan worth P500 million to Ayala Corp. and another P500 million to International Container Terminal Services Inc. in line with its strategy to boost its fixed-income fund portfolio.

In a statement, Mayo Ongsingco, Insular's chief investment officer, said that the loans allowed Insular Life to lock-in interest income at relatively competitive rates with low-risk borrowers.

Both loans were intended to finance permanent working capital requirements and arranged by Insular Life subsidiary Insular Investment and Trust Corp.

Ongsingco said that given the nature of Insular Life's business requirements, there was a need to explore investment opportunities that would match its long-term obligations and at the same time meet its investment income targets.

The executive said that term loans to companies like Ayala and ICTSI offer them some of the most stable sources of income that fit their long-term requirements.

Ayala is one of the country's largest conglomerates with market capitalization of P140 billion, and a diversified portfolio of business interests, including real estate, banking and telecommunications.

ICTSI has exclusive rights to manage and operate the Manila International Container Port and operates three other domestic ports, accounting for 63 percent of the country's containerized cargo volumes.

Shipbuilding industry . . .

From page B1

with an Australian buyer, is spending about $1 million to increase its capacity, company gen eral manager Doug Border told visiting journalists from Manila.

In turn, FBMA Bobcock's revenues are expected to rise from only $5 million this year to about $22 million next year with the projected sale of two units, Aboitiz added.

FBMA Bobcock, which owns a 6.5-hectare shipyard in West Cebu Industrial Park, builds upscale high-speed vessels such as patrol boats and sells these for about $10 million each. While the core business is building new vessels, it also accepts repair, maintenance and conversion works.

Aboitiz said the company, which started building ships in 1997, had difficulty penetrating the global market at first but established a good track record after it bagged a contract with the British navy. It has so far built and exported 14 units.

The Philippines is the only country in Asia where Bobcock has shipbuilding operations.

"We have certain advantages in terms of labor costs. We can spend time getting the job right," Border said, noting that the country's English-speaking workforce was hard to match even by countries which offer cheaper labor such as China.

FBMA Bobcock employs about 150 workers, of which 80 percent are Balamban residents. It takes about 40 weeks to build each high-speed ferry.

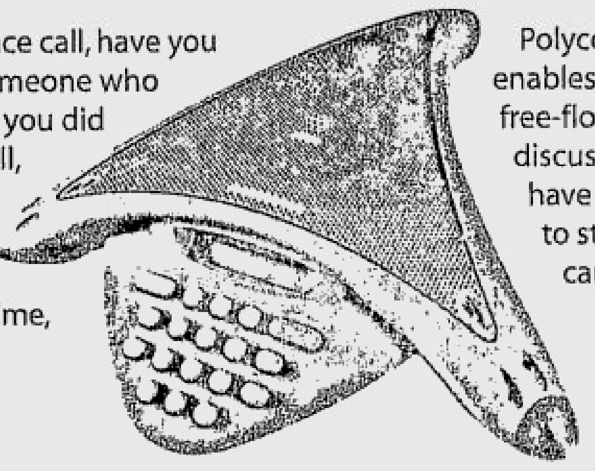
On the other hand, THI builds cargo ships as big as an oil tanker. It produces a ship for export every 40 days and expects $60-$70 million in turnover this year, Aboitiz said.

THI is set to invest about P170 million more to beef up its facility, particularly to construct a second slipway for building ships with a deadweight capacity of up to 90,000 tons, Aboitiz said. Its existing slipway allows the building of ships with a deadweight capacity of up to 52,000 tons.

"We have orders up to 2008. We have a huge export backlog," Aboitiz said.

Each of THI's large carrier, which is made of steel, is being sold for about $17 million. Since it started operations in 1996, THI has built about 50 of these cargo ships for export.

In its video presentation, THI said Balamban was a natural hub for marine and heavy industries and Cebu, as an educational center south of the country which produces 20,000 fresh graduates each year, is an ample supplier of skilled manpower.



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Q&A:

1. What are Retail Treasury Bonds (RTBs)?

The Retail Treasury Bonds (RTBs) are part of the government's savings mobilization program designed to make government securities available to retail investors. It is issued by the Republic of the Philippines through the Bureau of the Treasury. This issue of the RTBs will have a maturity of 3 years and an investor may purchase any tenor or a combination thereof. Interest or coupon payments will be paid quarterly compared to the regular Treasury Bonds which are paid semi-annually.

2. Why invest in RTBs?

The RTBs are designed to provide a safe, high-yielding and affordable savings instrument.

RTBs are safe. They are considered practically risk-free because they are direct, unconditional and general obligations of the Republic of the Philippines.

RTBs are high-yielding. Interest rates are superior to typical time deposit rates.

RTBs are affordable. The minimum denomination is only P5,000 and in multiples of P5,000 thereafter.

3. Who can purchase the RTBs?

The *RTBs* aim to cater to retail investors such as individuals, and corporations who are looking for a safe, affordable and high-yielding investment for their savings. In addition, the *RTBs* will also be available for purchase by financial and other institutional investors.

4. Where and when can an investor purchase RTBs?

The *RTBs* will be sold to the public during the Public Offering (PO) which will be announced in major dailies.

The Public Offering is the opportunity given to retail investors to subscribe to the RTBs through LANDBANK and DBP and the accredited Underwriters and Selling Agents.

The terms and conditions applicable to the RTBs as well as copies of the complete documentation will be made available during the Public Offering by each Underwriter and Selling Agent.

5. How does an investor participate in the PO?

Investors may purchase the bonds over the counter from the Underwriter or Selling Agent nearest them, subject to the minimum deposit requirements of each Underwriter and Selling Agent.

They will be required to open a peso deposit account or designate an existing peso account where interest payment and principal redemption of the *RTBs* will be credited.

For corporations, copies of the Board Resolutions authorizing the purchase of RTBs and indicating authorized signatories and specimen signatures shall be required.

6. What is an investor's proof of ownership?

The Underwriters and Selling Agents will sell the RTBs to individuals and other investors on a non-recourse basis through confirmations of outright sale (the "Confirmations of Sale") issued by the Underwriter or Selling Agent. Investors may pick up these Confirmations of Sale a few days after the close of the public offering from the offices of the Underwriter or Selling Agent. In the meantime, an Acknowledgement Receipt will be issued to investors at the time of payment.

No certificate will be issued to bondholders as ownership by individuals and other investors will be registered in electronic form under the BTr's Registry of Scripless Securities.

7. Can an investor still purchase RTBs after the public offering?

After the PO, an investor can buy *RTBs* from the secondary market at prevailing market prices.

8. What are the risks involved in investing in RTBs?

The RTBs are considered having the least credit-risk because they represent the direct and unconditional obligation of the government thereby enjoying the highest certainty of payment. The yield is assured if the investor holds on to the bond until maturity. However, if an investor opts to sell the RTBs in the secondary market prior to its maturity, then it will be subject to interest rate risk depending on the prevailing market rate at the time the RTBs are resold in the secondary market.

9. Where can an investor trade his RTBs?

Investors can sell their *RTBs* to the Underwriter/ Selling Agent from which the RTBs were originally purchased subject to prevailing market rates.

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Wall St. to take cue from mall lines, economy

NEW YORK—Investors will straggle back from a weekend of turkey leftovers and daunting lines at cash registers to a fresh month on Wall Street and more data that points to strengthening economy, analysts say.

But any gains in the stock market this week as investors return in full force from the Thanksgiving Day holiday may be tempered by nagging concerns over high share prices and record lows in the dollar.

"The valuation of stocks is what is preventing them from going a lot higher at this point," said John Davidson, president and chief executive officer of PartnerRe Asset Management. "There is more confidence around the economy than around stocks."

Light volumes marked last week, when the stock market shut on Thursday for Thanksgiving and closed early on Friday. But major market gauges scored hefty gains for the week. The blue-chip Dow Jones industrial average climbed 1.6 percent, finishing Friday at 9,782.46, while the tech-stuffed Nasdaq jumped 3.5 percent, ending at 1,960.26, and the broad Standard & Poor's 500 rose 2.2 percent to close at 1,058.20.

But for November, it was a different story, with the Dow down 0.2 percent, while the Nasdaq gained 1.5 percent and the S&P 500 added 0.7 percent.

For the year, though, the trend remains buoyant, with the Dow up 17 percent, the Nasdaq up 48 percent and the S&P 500 up 20 percent.

A slew of strong data on the US economy helped propel stocks higher last week. And analysts expect reports this week to point to improvements in the job market in November as well as in the nation's manufacturing and services sectors.

A hectic weekend of shopping also will grab the limelight this week, as investors search for evidence that consumers are spending heavily this holiday season and helping stoke the economic recovery.

"The market has developed an upward bias, and I think it will continue into this week," said Stanley Nabi, managing director at Credit Suisse Asset Management.

Americans made their annual day-after-Thanksgiving pilgrimage to the malls on Friday for predawn sales offering hefty markdowns. Analysts widely expect this year's holiday season to show a big improvement from last year's weak levels.

"You start to enter a seasonally strong period for stocks, and a lot of optimism about the Christmas season," said Rick Meckler, president of investment firm Liberty View Capital Management. "There will be a lot of focus on how this weekend's sales went, and if those numbers are good."

The day after Thanksgiving—known as Black Friday because it once marked the day when retailers got out of the red—is the traditional start of the holiday shopping season, which generates as much as 40 percent of annual revenues for key gift destinations such as toy stores and apparel chains.

"Between now and Christmas, it's really going to be about how companies individually are doing, in what for many of them is a 'make or break' time of year," Meckler said.

The November payrolls number, due on Friday, will be the main event this week. But investors also will eye weekly employment data plus surveys of the manufacturing and services sectors for hints that economic recovery is robust enough to support the big run-up in stock prices this year.

"The economic figures that have been coming out have been very comforting and very supportive of a higher market," Nabi said. "We are going to have more good economic news, and I think that will carry the market higher."

Non-farm payrolls are expected to have added 135,000 jobs in November, while the US unemployment rate is forecast to remain at 6.0 percent, according to economists polled by Reuters.

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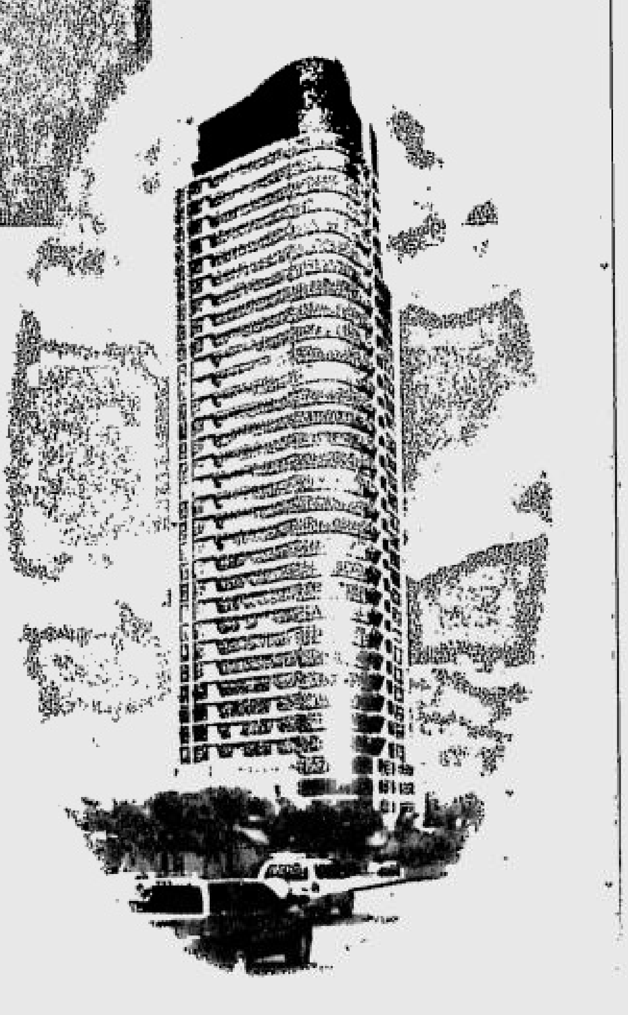

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Japan gov't to put Ashikaga under state control

TOKYO—Japan plans to put Ashikaga Bank, the core unit of Ashikaga Financial Group, under state control after the major regional bank was found insolvent as of the end of September, a financial source told Reuters on Saturday.

Japan's government will hold an emergency financial crisis meeting on Saturday evening to approve a public fund injection into Ashikaga, said the source, who declined to be identified.

This will be a second public injection into a domestic bank this year, after the government injected 1.96 trillion yen ($17.96 billion) in June into the fifth-largest bank, Resona Holdings Inc.

But unlike the Resona bail-out, the government would temporarily nationalize Ashikaga, which dominates lending and deposit business in Tochigi prefecture north of Tokyo, in a move that will wipe out its shareholders' equity, said the source.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will convene the financial crisis meeting, to be attended by key financial officials including Financial Services Minister Heizo Takenaka and Bank of Japan Governor Toshihiko Fukui.

Takenaka said on Friday that no action was imminent.

However, Ashikaga is in the spotlight as banking authorities shift their focus to regional lenders, which have lagged bigger banks in disposing of bad loans and repairing their capital.

Analysts have said the question was not whether the government would step in but what method it would use if it did— the main choices being injecting funds into the bank to beef up its capital or putting it under state control.

The financial source said that recent inspections by the Financial Services Agency (FSA) had revealed that Ashikaga had negative net worth as of the end of March, and the agency has judged the bank remained insolvent as of the end of September.

The source gave no likely amount of the public funds to be used in the Ashikaga case, but the business daily Nihon Keizai Shimbun reported that it would exceed one trillion yen.

A public fund injection would be the third for Ashikaga.

The bank received 135 billion yen in taxpayer funds in 1998 and 1999.

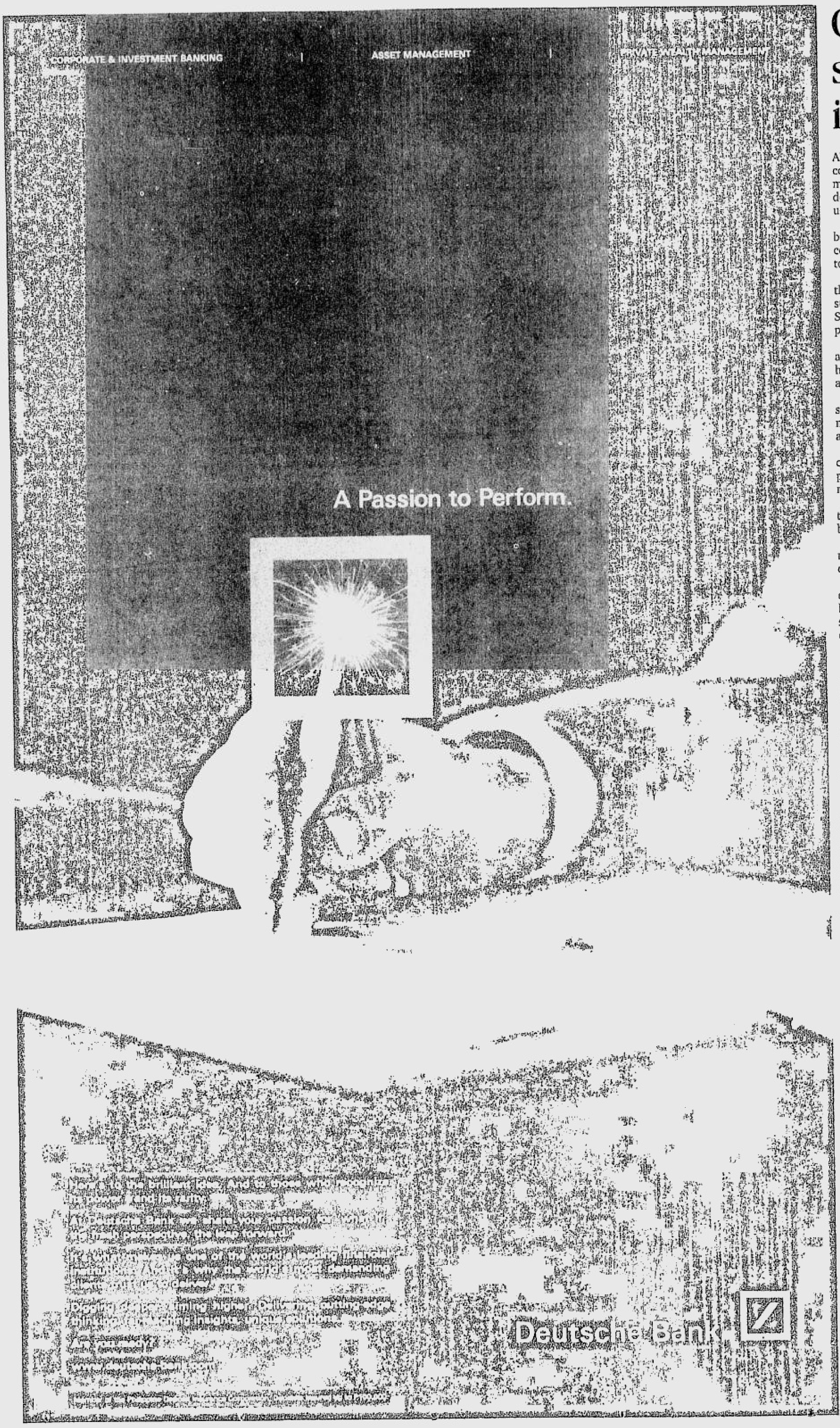
After taking full control of Ashikaga, the government will dispatch personnel to run the bank and look for candidates to buy the bank as early as possible, the financial source said.

No official comment was immediately available from Ashikaga, nor from government officials.

The move on Ashikaga—just an eighth of Resona in size but larger than Mellon Financial Corp of the United States—would indicate that the government is at last taking a step toward addressing the problem of regional banks. *Reuters*

HEADQUARTER of troubled Japanese regional bank Ashikaga Bank in Utsunomiya, Tochigi Prefecture.

AFP



Global chip sales rose in October

AMSTERDAM—October global sales of semiconductors showed their strongest month-on-month growth since March 2002, from strong demand for a wide range of electronics products, an industry survey found on Friday.

Worldwide chip sales amounted to $15.4 billion, up 6.8 percent from September, according to data from the World Semiconductor Trade Statistics (WSTS) organization

"The October WSTS data are amplifying the positive trends observed in the already strong third quarter," said the European Semiconductor Industry Association, which publishes WSTS data.

"Demand for semiconductors was strong all across the board, translating into generally high billings for commodity products as well as for application specific chips," it added.

Executives of semiconductor companies have said they usually wait for recovering sales of commodity chips before they call a broad and sustainable upturn of the market.

Fueling growth in October were chips for cars and personal computers and consumer products such as televisions, DVD players and mobile phones.

Global chip sales rose 23.3 percent versus the same month in 2002. On a year-to-date basis, growth was 16.4 percent.

Demand for chips has accelerated in recent months after a slow start to the year when the deadly SARS virus put a damper on Asian trade.

The chip industry is showing signs of recovering from its worst-ever downturn, which began in 2001 amid a larger technology slump resulting from a sluggish overall economy and corporate spending cutbacks. *Reuters*

Schroeder off to China, eyes trade

BERLIN—German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder travels to China and Kazakhstan for a five-day trip on Sunday in which he will promote lower trade barriers and drum up support for booming German business in China.

Schroeder, making his fifth journey to China since taking office in 1998, will be accompanied by over 38 German business leaders, including Siemens AG chief executive Heinrich von Pierer on a trip that will focus on fostering the burgeoning economic ties between Germany and China.

Ahead of the trip, a German government official said Berlin would like to see greater exchange rate flexibility in China because of the advantages this would bring German firms. China's currency, the yuan, tends to be undervalued, the official said.

But the official said currency issues would not feature prominently in Schroeder's talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Premier Wen Jiabao and Chinese business leaders.

Also slated for discussion are human rights issues, the Iraq conflict as well as China's role as a mediator between North and South Korea, officials in Berlin said.

The senior government official said he was confident German investment in China could be doubled over the next three years.

German exports to China have been strong this year, helping to offset a slump in domestic demand.

Schroeder will also open an office in Beijing for a new firm called Joint Ventures TUI China Travel.

Joining Schroeder on the trip, which concludes with a stop-over visit to oil-rich Kazakhstan on Thursday and Friday, is Transport Minister Manfred Stolpe.

Stolpe may be hoping to secure additional engineering contracts for German industry to follow up the German Transrapid high-speed train system being built in Shanghai. *Reuters*

US factory layoffs seen ending, but future is grim

WASHINGTON—After a bloodletting that cost 2.8 million jobs in just over three years, US factory payrolls are expected to soon start inching higher, economists believe.

But many manufacturing jobs may never come back.

First rise

"The declines are just about over," said UBS economist Jim O'Sullivan.

He predicted the first rise in factory employment since July 2000 could come as early as next week, when November payrolls are released, or perhaps one month later.

While employment outside of manufacturing has begun to grow after a long jobless recovery from the recession, factory jobs have remained elusive— particularly in rust-belt states which could be key to President George W. Bush in the 2004 election.

But the pace of factory layoffs has finally begun to ease.

During the slump, job cuts averaged 134,000 a month. Since August, that has dropped to just 30,000, and October's 24,000 decline was the smallest in nearly three years.

Factory data also suggest jobs are poised to expand, with the Institute for Supply Management's employment index hitting 47.7 in October— inches from the break-even mark of 47.8.

O'Sullivan said payrolls tend to rise when the index is above 47.8 and fall when it is below.

But just try telling that to an unemployed factory worker.

Kerry Battles, 51, was laid off from his job at a Boeing Co. aircraft plant in Wichita, Kansas, in May 2002 after 12 years with the company.

His wife, Mary, an electrical panel assembler at competitor Raytheon Co. , worried she too, would lose her job.

The factory cut costs, and six months ago the couple began to hope Mary had escaped the massive layoffs devastating the industry.

But this month the ax fell, and Mary was laid off too.

"It's not getting better, it is getting worse. It is definitely getting worse," said Kerry Battles.

"All three of the aircraft companies here in town are still laying off, still sending work out of the country. It's not good."

A dying sector

Economists agree most of the factory jobs lost during and since the 2001 recession are gone for good . and warn that no one should expect a huge rebound in employment even when the layoffs finally come to an end.

Goldman Sachs economist Andrew Tilton said while about a million jobs have gone to cheaper overseas labor markets, most layoffs can be chalked up to a 12.8 percent gain in productivity in the last three years, allowing employers to eliminate more than a tenth of the factory work force.

"Nearly two-thirds of the jobs lost did not 'go' anywhere; they simply disappeared as more efficient production processes reduced the labor needed to produce a given amount of goods," Tilton said.

O'Sullivan believes factories will rehire long enough to allow businesses to restock depleted inventories, boosting payrolls for a few months into early 2004. But in the long run, he warned, jobs will remain hard to come by.

"I think it's like farming—where over time, a smaller and smaller share of the population are in manufacturing, even though output continues to grow rapidly, helped by stronger productivity," O'Sullivan said.

Decline

The decline of the factory sector is not lost on Kerry Battles. After his layoff, he returned to school to study computer science and will soon have a degree.

In the meantime, he's found a short-term job with the Machinists Union helping newly unemployed workers grapple with retraining options.

"Every day, all my clients are laid-off aircraft workers, and there's thousands of them. Probably after the first of the year, or maybe even before then, we're going to have so many people we're not going to be able to take care of them," he said. *Reuters*

SHOPPERS clog the aisles at Macy's Department store in New York City. Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving and traditionally the kickoff to the Christmas shopping season is expected to be big, thanks to a rebounding US economy that is positioned to drive better sales, particularly of higher-end goods. AFP

US fund managers review their options as dollar sags

NEW YORK—Global fund managers are reviewing their demand for US assets after the dollar sagged to record lows this week against the euro.

Although appetite for dollar-denominated equities and bonds has not markedly diminished yet, the euro's leap above $1.20 on Friday to a lifetime peak has once again underscored the dollar's dependency on capital inflows.

The United States is reliant on capital inflows to help finance its hefty current account deficit—a broad measure of the nation's global trade—currently at about 5 percent of gross domestic product. That deficit is a key factor hurting the dollar.

The visibly bruised greenback remains vulnerable to any sharp deceleration of foreign demand for US Treasuries, non-government bonds and equities, fund managers and currency analysts said.

For now, US stocks' robust performance on the back of a muscular economic rebound, as the world's biggest economy grew more than 8 percent in the third quarter, is helping to brake the dollar's decline.

That's partly because US equities' ascent is potentially stoking more foreign demand for stocks in the world's biggest equity market.

But inflows into dollar-denominated equities and may falter as other major economies outside the United States gain more traction, analysts said.

"To capture (returns from) the global economic recovery, fund managers are looking more outside the United States and that is going to reduce demand for dollar assets and weigh on the dollar," said Joseph Quinlan, managing director and chief market strategist with Banc of America Capital Management in New York. *Reuters*

Europe's small firms feel economic pinch

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Manufacturing, software and consulting firms took the top places on a ranking of Europe's 500 fastest-growing small- and medium-sized companies, but the roster was more than half blank for the first time.

Only 247 companies created new jobs at the 30 percent rate required to make the Europe's 500 list released Friday, which ranks companies by percentage increases in jobs and profits over the previous five years.

The shortfall was blamed on Europe's economic slow down. "The economic environment we've had the past two years is definitely an issue," said Philippe Leonard, Europe's 500 spokesman.

The list was set up in 1996 with European Union support and is sponsored by Microsoft Corp., 3i, the Boston Consulting Group and PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

The latest list covers 1997-2002.

Dutch business consulting firm Flex Group won first place, followed by over-the-counter drug supplier Omega Pharma and biotechnology firm Eurofins, both of Belgium.

The spotlighted businesses created a total of 111,116 positions between 1997 and 2002 and averaged a 23 percent annual rise in profits.

Manufacturers made up one quarter of the list, followed by software firms and white collar services such as finance.

No Internet and e-commerce companies were named to the list.

However, Leonard warned against reading too much into the apparent triumph of brick-and-mortar businesses over dot-com enterprises.

"Just because there are more companies in traditional industry doesn't mean traditional industry is booming," he said.

Nearly three-quarters of firms on the list are privately owned and more than half employed less than 100 people in 1997.

The survey was open to companies with fewer than 5,000 employees in 1997. *AP*

Maxxium Worldwide posts steady growth

MAXXIUM Worldwide ended its fiscal year of 2003 with total net sales that grew by almost 5 percent, while its core brands showed solid growth of 8 percent.

Maxxium Worldwide (Maxxium) is a global premium wine and spirits distributor.

It has operations in over 35 countries covering more than 60 markets around the world.

Its core activities include marketing, sales and distribution of premium wines and spirits.

These include Absolut Vodka, The Famous Grouse Scotch Whisky, Jim Beam Bourbon and Rémy Martin Cognac.

Maxxium's worldwide portfolio includes some of the most well-known premium brands: The Famous Grouse Scotch Whisky, Rémy Martin Cognac, Jim Beam Bourbon, Absolut Vodka, Cointreau Liqueur, Macallan Single Malt Scotch Whisky and Piper Heidsieck Champagne.

Maxxium's local market presence is strengthened by the distribution of prestigious partner brands such as Grants, Glenfiddich, Jose Cuervo, Jägermeister, Gancia, Whyte & Mackay, Masi, Louis Latour, E&J Gallo, Beringer Blass and Robert Mondavi.

Maxxium's unique partnership model and strong sales, marketing and distribution network offer opportunities for brand growth.

Maxxium offers independent brand owners strength and operational efficiencies in the most important wine and spirits markets around the world, as well as a solid global platform for launching new and building existing brands.

Despite clear economic challenges in the Euro zone, Maxxium Worldwide maintains a moderately optimistic outlook for 2003 / 2004.

Solid growth is expected in the Group's main markets of Canada, China, Australia and the UK, and the strong organic growth of the group's core brands is expected to continue.

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Islands Souvenirs' president Jay Aldeguer (center) stands with (from left) Donnie Tantoco of Shopwise, Samie Lim of PRA, former DTI secretary Jose Pardo, John Villamiel of Artwork, DTI Under Secretary Adrian Cristobal and Manuel Siggaoat.

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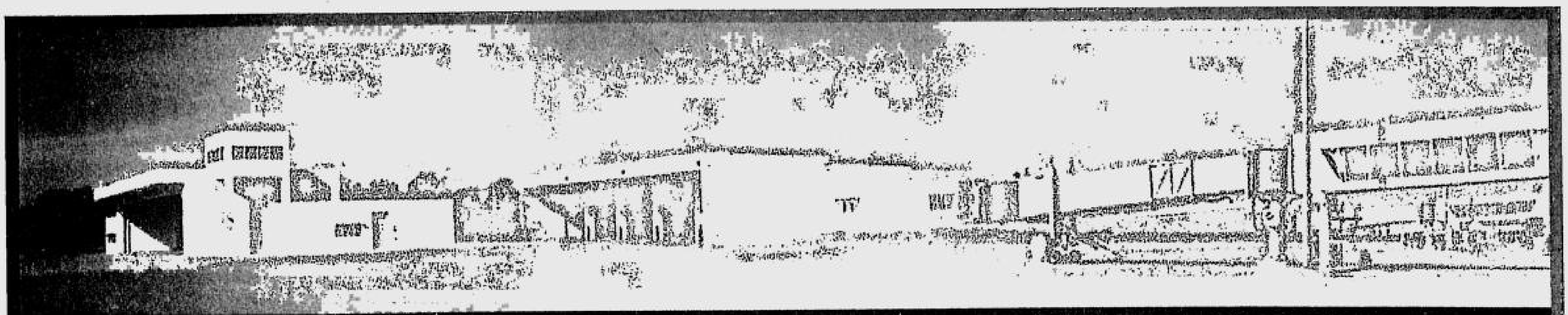

DAVAO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT:

Modernized airport to spur economy of Mindanao

The Davao International Airport opens today after it has been modernized to full international standards to serve as another gateway to the South. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will grace the opening, together with Secretary Leandro Mendoza of the Department of Transportation and Communications and the Mindanao political and business leaders.

The airport upgrading consisted of extension of the runway to 3,000 meters, the construction of new passenger and cargo terminals, and installation of equipment for airport operations, maintenance and air navigation.

The modernization of the airport will push President Arroyo's program of boosting economic development in Mindanao, spurring the tourism industry in Davao City and surrounding provinces, and pushing the development of the East Asia Growth Areas (EAGA). It will also contribute to the improvement of peace and order as investments come in and new jobs are created.

The project which cost P4.9 billion was funded by loans from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

The new Davao International Airport will accommodate 1.2 million passengers and 4,600 tons of cargo annually, 7-10 aircraft parking positions, 8-10 aircraft landings per hour, 688 car parking bays. It will have 14 domestic check-in counters and another 14 international check-in counters, 8 gate holding areas and 4 units of passenger boarding bridges. The airport will also meet the increasing passenger demand up to the year 2010.

The upgrading has addressed the operational and safety shortfalls at the Davao airport. It also represents a more cost effective addition to the country's international air transport capacity than adding the equivalent capacity to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), thus benefiting the civil sector as a whole.

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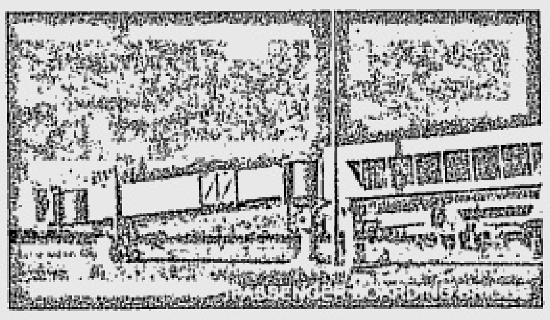
Package 3: Procurement and airfield maintenance and navigational aids and communications equipment.

Package 4: Capacity enhancement of the Civil Aviation Training Center.

Package 5: Consulting services which involves the detailed design and construction supervision, including topographical boundary surveys and non-destructive pavement testing; project monitoring, airport security enhancement by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).



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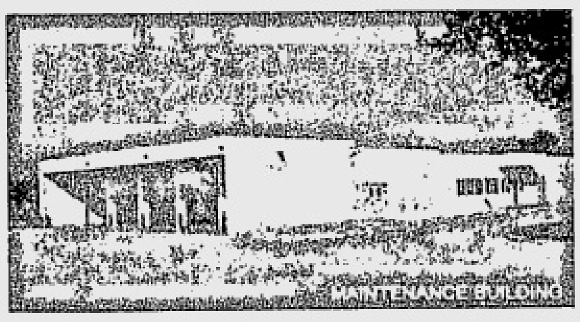

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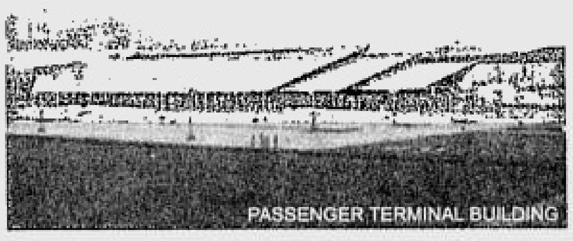

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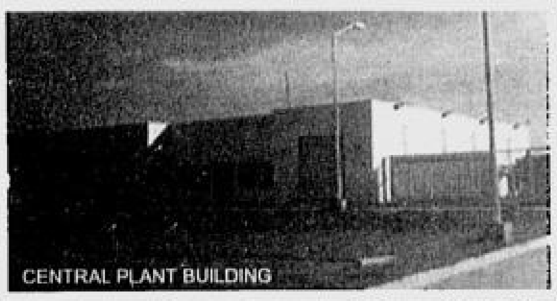

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Editor Leo Magno

3G rules out by 2004, but are operators ready?

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission (NTC) has formed a five-man committee to work on government rules on third-generation (3G) mobile services, a top official said during the second annual IT forum of the IT Journalists Association of the Philippines or Cyberpress.

The committee is expected to come up with draft guidelines by the first quarter of 2004, and believes that the rules will be ready by the first half of next year, according to Edgardo Cabarios, director for common carrier of the NTC.

Cabarios is a member of the committee.

The official said that the rules will likely determine how many local players will be allowed to enter the Philippine 3G market, given the limited spectrum allocation for the next-generation mobile service.

Cabarios also said the rules will also decide whether to allow existing operators to participate in the planned bidding of the 3G frequencies.

"We might bid out the frequency that will be allocated for 3G after the rules are out," Cabarios stressed. "We're coming out with the 3G rules with the growing clamor from the industry."

3G is a mobile phone service that features faster mobile networks, allowing for more multimedia applications to become available to subscribers.

According to Marko Tiesmaki, Asia Pacific chair of the Global Mobile Suppliers Association, the existing operators in the Philippines are capable of delivering 3G-like services this year with the deployment of faster mobile networks like Edge.

Tiesmaki, also speaking at the Cyberpress forum, said that all new handsets will have Edge support by 2004, as operators move toward 3G. Edge is considered a step closer to 3G.

Both Smart Communications and Globe Telecom are now "testing" their respective Edge networks. Edge is an upgrade from the General Packet Radio Service (GPRS)-based network.

However, mobile phone operators are generally still reluctant to move to 3G mobile services, according to Globe and Smart executives who also spoke at the Cyberpress forum.

Citing the European experience with 3G, both Globe and Smart believe that there is still money to be made out of existing networks.

"Of course, there is still the issue of handset availability," said Ramon Isberto, head of public affairs of Smart Communications.

Isberto stressed that the "jury is still out for 3G."

"We're not in a rush to go to 3G although we're also closely watching the market," the Smart executive said.

Globe also agreed that the availability of handsets and cost related to moving to 3G networks, remain the major issues in migrating to faster networks.

"It's not easy to get into 3G," said Nicanor Santiago III, wireless business development head of Globe.

Santiago said that Asian operators are more sober when it comes to migrating to 3G.

"Deploying third-generation mobile services is a question of cost and relevance," he added.

The operators admitted that they are still testing their Edge networks due to lack of handsets and applications in the local market. They did not say when they would deploy Edge-based services.

MS Phil see modest revenue growth in FY '04

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

MICROSOFT Philippines is expecting modest revenue growth in fiscal year 2004, a top official said.

The revenue forecast of 10 percent for fiscal year '04 is lower than the 15 percent growth in revenues the company reported during fiscal year 2003, according to Antonio "TJ" Javier, incoming managing director of Microsoft Philippines.

Microsoft Philippines fiscal year starts July 2002 and ends June 2003.

With the incoming elections in May 2004 and the "wait-and-see" attitude of most enterprise firms, Javier said that the revenue growth forecast is a reflection of general perception in the local industry.

"I believe the manufacturing firms are not spending next year. I think growth will come from the enterprise and telecoms," Javier added.

He said that the local subsidiary is focusing on pushing more enterprise solutions rather than on "box-pushing" next year.

Microsoft Philippines' solutions business contributed about 20 percent to overall revenues during FY '03, while enterprise revenues grew by 57 percent.

"Microsoft is trying to move up the business value. We've identified 80 firms which we intend to target next year with our enterprise agreements," Javier said.

Meanwhile, Microsoft Philippines also disclosed that its smartphone handset is making a killing in the local market.

Microsoft has partnered with Smart Communications in the development of the smartphone.

It also announced the creation of a user group called "M.pulse," which will provide the local firm direct feedback from customers.

Sony Ericsson wins award for mobile gaming innovation

ANALYST firm Frost & Sullivan recently gave Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications the Customer Education Innovation for mobile gaming award for rolling out an innovative way of offering mobile games for download on cellular phones.

The award is presented to companies that have demonstrated excellence in customer education within its industry and those who look for long-term ways in developing the market, and creating awareness of and trust in new capabilities of mobile phones through innovative thinking and implementation.

"The ability to download and pay for games over the air is a new capability, which the majority of the market is either unaware of, or wary of. Sony Ericsson has, we believe, come up with a very innovative method of overcoming this. It was also the first company to look for a way of integrating mobile gaming with console gaming, as well as organizing events to promote playing games on handsets," said Jan Sythoff, analyst for Frost & Sullivan.

Sony Ericsson partnered with Jamdat Mobile to gain the rights to the popular game, "Tony Hawk Pro Skater." Instead of simply embedding the game into the phone, the company split the game—embedding just two out of the five levels. Once the user has cracked the first two levels, they must download and pay for additional levels and characters. This strategy was also adopted for the Sony Ericsson Z600, which has the V-Rally 2 racing game embedded. Further levels, racetracks and associated content have to be downloaded from Sony Ericsson's mobile portal (http://www.SonyEricsson.com).

The company has also been recognized for its efforts in integrating mobile gaming with console gaming. By reaching certain levels of the game on the mobile phone, cheats and codes are released which can be used to play new levels and characters in the Sony Playstation 2 version—an innovative feat that educates users and developers of the possibilities which mobile gaming offers.

In addition, Sony Ericsson has come up with major advancements in mobile gaming which include the creation of the Sony Ericsson Gameboard EGB-10, a console device that can be attached to the Z600 and comes close to a real game console experience; the inclusion of the advanced gaming engine Mophun into Sony Ericsson mobile phones, thus providing superior gameplay; and the company's partnership with Cartoon Network to provide mobile phone content such as Tom & Jerry, Scooby Doo and The Flintstones in conjunction with Macrospace.

P900

Sony Ericsson
12:45

Z600

Sun, Siemens hold Java apps dev't tilt

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

SUN Microsystems and Siemens Information and Communications Mobile are holding another Java application development competition following a successful event last year, the companies said.

Last year, close to 2,000 students participated in the competition, dubbed Java Masters.

Also, about 10,000 people logged on to the Java Masters website to vote for the best application, based on the demos and descriptions.

Last year's winner, Ukranian student Eugene Yatsenko, developed the game "Blazers." The young student has already signed a contract with Siemens.

This year, the competition is open to individuals and start-up firms, and will have two categories: entertainment and business applications.

Siemens said that the winning applications will likely be bundled with its newer handset like the M55, MC60 and SX1 mobile phones.

The applications will be judged based on user-friendliness and marketability of an application, regardless of it being a game or a business application, the company said.

Final date for application submission is on March 15, 2004. Participants have to register at www.javamasters.org to join.

The top prize includes a trip to Munich, Germany, a visit to the Formula One race in Hockenheim, Germany, and an exclusive Siemens high-end phone.

Meanwhile, the winner of the business award prize will gain a professional business coaching by a Siemens Mobile Acceleration Investment Director.

IT PROJECTS COMPLETED

Subic poised to become modern freeport, ecozone

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

SUBIC Bay Freeport—This former United States Naval base which has been turned into a freeport and economic zone is dead set to become the "most efficient and service-oriented" freeport and economic zone in the Philippines, a top official said.

Amid controversies hounding its leadership and the upcoming presidential elections, Felicito Payumo, chair and administrator of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, said that the SBMA's four-year modernization plan has been finished, and is now being implemented.

Payumo cited the Subic Bay Freeport's Geographic Information System (SBF-GIS) worth more than $300,000 as among several modernization projects completed this year.

The SBF-GIS, he added, now allows "foreign locators to 'shop' online and see our facilities."

The SBF-GIS, which was contracted out in 1998 to FF Cruz Inc., provides critical geographic information of the freeport that now aids SBMA in planning, management and decision-making in relation to the physical and economic development of the area.

It also aids the agency in protecting the ecology in this former American facility.

The project was eventually turned over to SBMA, which in turn, began developing various applications such as asset information system for the management of fixed assets.

Payumo also noted that SBMA has also completed the automation of its financial system through a project called Integrated Financial System Management.

Funded by an approved loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, SBMA has fully automated its financial and accounting systems.

Other systems in place include the ecology center information system, the SBMA badging system, the trade automation and facilitation system, and the medcap information system, SBMA'officials said.

"We have automated most of our (business) processes," Payumo added, noting that close to 90 percent of SBMA's processes are now computerized.

"This now allows us to be more competitive because the battleground right now is speed," the official added.

Payumo stressed the modernization plan of the Subic Bay Freeport is "just one facet" of the institutional strengthening program, which he began four years ago.

"These IT systems are now in place. So when my successor comes, he will not have any problems even if he is not that IT-savvy," the official said.

The modernization project was funded mostly through a loan from the World Bank, he added.

According to SBMA records, there are a total of 17 information technology companies and electronic firms that have located in the freeport as of Oct. 31, 2003. These companies employ close 10,000 people.

Last year, the Subic Bay Freeport accounted for $1.31 billion worth of the country's exports, P2.5 million in new investments, about 50,000 jobs, and close to P4 billion in customs collections.

Motorola names new country head for RP

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

AMERICAN handset manufacturer Motorola has named Arlene Aran Amarante as the new country head for the personal communication sector, as the company makes its bid to regain its leadership position in the Philippines, an official said.

Amarante will be in charge of the company's operations in the Philippines.

Prior to joining Motorola, she was national sales manager of Sara Lee-Branded Apparel. She also has served as the national sales manager of L'Oreal Philippines Inc.

Amarante has also been with Colgate-Palmolive Philippines Inc., Goya Kean's and Hershey's of Philippine Cocoa Corp., a subsidiary of Metro Pacific Corp.

"We are extremely pleased to have Arlene as the new country manager of Motorola. She brings a broad base of sales, marketing and management experience to the position and is ideally suited to successfully lead the Motorola operations in the Philippines," said Scott Durchslag, corporate vice president of strategy and business development for PCS and general manager for PCS Southeast Asia of Motorola.

RP still a pre-paid, SMS-driven market

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

THE PHILIPPINE market is largely a pre-paid and "text-driven" market where mobile phone subscribers come from relatively low-income brackets, a local operator said during the second annual IT forum of the IT Journalists Association of the Philippines.

Despite being labeled as the "texting capital of the world," mobile phone operator Smart Communications admitted dilemma over pricing their services amid the market that has low disposable income.

The average per capita income in the Philippines is around P8,000 a month.

Ramon Isberto, head of Smart's public affairs, said that the operator will not just jump into the latest technology because the industry dictates it.

However, the operator has found ways to solve its dilemma by adopting the sachet marketing concept, wherein pre-paid subscribers can top-up credits for a few minutes' worth of calls for several pesos than having to subscribe to the operator's service.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Emilia David Tadeo consisting of her bank account in BPI, Malabon Branch under Savings Account no. 57633374-66 was adjudicated to her surviving heir namely Justino B. David, Felicidad B. David and Eliza David-delos Reyes by means of public document executed on Nov. 21, 2003, and ratified before Atty. Dennis G. Orendain, Notary Public for and in Calamba Laguna and entered into his Notarial Registry as Doc. No. 01; Page No. 01; Book No. X; Series of 2003
PDI-Nov. 24, Dec. 1 & 8, 2003

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

Poblacion, Mc Arthur Highway, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan
Tel. Nos. (075) 568-7388 and (075) 568-7292

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed proposals together with 10% bid bond for the purchase on CASH BASIS of the Bank properties listed below will be received at the LBP-Urdaneta Lending Center not later than December 16, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. at which place, date and time, said proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders.

DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM BID
1. **TCT # N-223227** - a parcel of residential land located at Brgy. Fairview, Quezon City (Chestnut Street) with an area of 720 sq.ms. with improvements.	3,240,000
2. **TCT # C-340812** - a parcel of residential land located in Bo. Deparo, Calookan City along Kalaw Street and within Amparo Novaville Subd. with an area of 242 sq.ms.	774,000.00
3. **TCT # 139149** - a parcel of agricultural land located at Barrio San Gabriel, Bayambang, Pangasinan, subject property for bidding is 1/2 portion only with an area of 10,191.50 square meters.	30,600.00
4. **TCT # 203737** - a parcel of agricultural land located at Bo. San Gabriel, Bayambang, Pangasinan with an area of 1,480 square meters.	44,400.00

If for any reason the above mentioned date is declared a non-working holiday, then the public bidding shall be held on the next working day at the same time and place aforementioned.

Bidding forms may be obtained from the Office of the Head, Pangasinan Lending Center, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan. Prospective bidders are enjoined to inspect the above listed properties before entering their bids. The sale of the properties shall be "AS-IS-WHERE-IS". The winning bidder/s shall take possession of the awarded properties without seeking assistance from the Bank.

The Bank reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein or accept the bid proposals which in its judgment is most advantageous to the Bank. The Bank's decision on the matter shall be final and binding.

(Sgd.) **MR. FRANCISCO A. PASADO**
Chairman
Committee on Bids and Awards
and Disposal of Bank Properties

(PDI--Dec. 1, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Cebu

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Interested manufacturers are hereby invited to apply for eligibility and to submit bids for the supply of 5,700 pcs. Monobloc elementary school tablet armchairs and 5,700 pcs. Monobloc secondary school tablet armchairs charged against the Provincial School Board Funds drawn under PR#03-2919 dated 10-26-03, ALOBS #200-03-10-187 with an approved budget of Php5,000,000.00 to be distributed to the different public schools in the Province of Cebu.

In order to qualify for participation in the public bidding, the bidders should conform to the eligibility criteria as prescribed under Section 23.6 of the approved IRR-A of Republic Act No. 9184.

Eligibility and Bid Forms, tender documents and request for quotation will be available for issuance on December 2-8, 2003 within the government prescribed office hours at BAC Secretariat, PGSO, DEP-ED Bldg., Cebu Capitol, Cebu City, upon payment of Php100.00 per request for quotation which is not refundable.

Closing date for issuance of the eligibility and bid forms, tender documents and request for quotation will be on December 7, 2003 at BAC Secretariat. **Pre-bidding conference** will be conducted on **December 8, 2003 at 10:00 A.M.** at the Conference Room, Office of the Provincial Governor. Attendance is compulsory and failure to attend shall mean disqualification during the actual bidding. **Bidding** date will be on **December 22, 2003 at 10:00 A.M.** at Conference Room, Governor's Office, Capitol Bldg., Cebu City.

All particulars relative to the eligibility process, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

The Bids and Awards Committee of the Province of Cebu reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or formality therein and to accept bids considered complying and most advantageous to the government.

For more information, please contact the BAC Secretariat at telephone numbers 253-9614 / 253-3995.

This requirement is also posted at the PGSO Bulletin Board, DEP-ED Bldg., Capitol, Cebu City.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO T. HABIN**
Provincial Budget Officer
Chairman

(PDI--Dec. 1 & 7, 2003)

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www.peza.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (THE OWNER) invites all interested bidders to apply for Eligibility and to bid for the Supply and Installation including Testing and Commissioning of Networking Equipment for PEZA Head Office.

2. **Description of Project**
   Approved Budget : P2.80 Million
   Source of Fund : PEZA

   SCOPE OF WORK
   a. Testing, reconfiguration and commissioning of 2 existing units of Cisco Router 2509.
   b. Supply, installation and testing of Structure Cables –
      - Gigabit backbone – PEZA building – 2nd to 6th floors with termination to the Network Data Center (NDC)
      - Cat5e for horizontal cables
      - Network Data Center (NDC) will use Cat6 cables
   c. Supply, installation and configuration, testing and commissioning of Edge Switches and Core Switch.
   d. Supply, installation and configuration, testing and commissioning of 3 servers running on Oracle 91 and RH Linux Platform.
   e. Provision of technical support and training to the operation of the systems and equipment.

3. Bid Documents may be secured upon presentation of BAC Certificate of Registration and payment of a non-refundable fee of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00) from the BAC Secretariat 3/F Almeda Building Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City from 03 to 12 December 2003, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Mondays to Fridays only. The deadline for the Submission of Bids is on 06 January 2003, 10:00 am, at the Office of the Deputy Director General for Finance & Administration. Bid Opening shall be at 2:00 p.m. of the same date.

4. A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on 19 December 2003, 10:00 a.m. at the 6th Floor, PEZA Social Hall.

5. PEZA reserves the right to reject any bid or any part thereof, to waive any defect or informality therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the Applicant and/or Bidder may incur in the preparation of Eligibility Documents and of the Bids, and will entertain only such Bid/s established to be the most advantageous to the Government.

6. The IRR of RA 9184 shall govern in this bidding process.

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Dec. 1 & 8, 2003)

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ATTY. MANUEL PEÑAFLOR CRUZ

Retired Deputy Chief, Crime Investigation
Chief Legal, PC/INP Criminal Investigation
Chairman, Police Law Enforcement Board, Cainta, Rizal

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on November 27, 2003 at the age of 74.

His loving wife **LUDY**; children **Myra** and **Benny**, **Melody**, **Melissa** and **Noli**; grandchildren **Paolo**, **Mina**, **Patrick**, **Richelle**, **Peewee**, **Rina**, and **Mathew**; brothers and sisters **Carding**, **Josie**, **Tom**, **Fred**, (†)**Floro**, **Kokoy**, **Romy**, **Doring** and **Atty. Sergs** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Capilla San Aemiliani, Arlington East the Garden Chapels, Pasig City.

Interment will be on December 4, 2003 (Thursday) at Evergreen Memorial Garden, Pasig City, after the 1:00 pm Mass at Arlington.

CARLITO BAGUNA OINAL

Gigaquit, Surigao Del Norte

Peacefully joined our Lord on November 29, 2003 at the age of 67.

His loving wife **Luisita**; children **Danny & Eda**, **Carlene & Archie**, **Elna & George**, **Lenlen & Jun**, **Gigi & Nelson**, **Anna & Dave**, **Carmilla & Ariel**; together with sisters **Pansing & Wennie**, grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels at Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be announced later.

Our Dearly Beloved Auntie

POLICRONIA HERNANDEZ LLANA

Peacefully joined her Creator
on 29 November 2003 at the age of 87.

Her bereaved brothers and sisters **CESAR** (†) and **SEVERINA** (†) **ILAGAN**, **MARTIN** (†) and **TACIANA LLANA**, **ERASMO** (†) and **FLORENTINA** (†) **LLANA**, **JOSE** (†) and **JANUARIA UMALI**, **ANASTACIO** (†) and **CAROLINA LLANA**, **VICENTE** and **JOSEFINA LLANA**; her nephews and nieces **Jovencio & Shirley**, **Rudy & Norma**, **Peewee & Nilda**, **Joe & Lilia**, **Viging**, **Toti & Vilma**, **Ben & Rose**, **Billy**, **Romy**, **Emelyn**, **Gina**, **Aileen**, **Joe & Glory**, **Lito** (†) **& Lulu**, **Manny & Elsie**, **Bobet & Dory**, **Jojo & Volet**, **Dick & Eva**, **Allan & Ruby**, **Boogie & Libay**, **Cris** (†) **& Cacay**, **Ver & Emel**, **Boy**, **Edwin & Bess**, **Boy & Beth**, **Gene & Cecil**, **Linda**, **Bobot**, **Gerard & Aleli**, **Bing & Heidi** (†), **Carl & Grace**, **Anna**, **Sonny & Vi**, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Batangas City. Interment will be on December 04, 2003 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Batangas Catholic Cemetery.

Carolina Batac Henson

Peacefully joined her husband ***Ben*** *and Creator on November 30, 2003 at the age of 62.*

She is survived by her children and children-in-law **Suzette** and **Pete**, **Bob** and **Emelyn**; grandchildren **Martin**, **Danica**, **Roby**, **Jackie**, **Trisha** and **Kalee**; sisters and brothers-in-law **Lita** and **Jun**, **Baby** and **Paul**; in-laws **Tony**, **Lulu** and **Olive**.

Her remains lie in state at the Christ the King Chapel, Green Meadows.

Interment will be on Wednesday, December 3, 2003 at Holy Garden Valley, Sumulong Highway, Antipolo City.

So Lovingly Remembered . . .
So Sadly Missed . . .

VENANCIO "BANCH" L. FRANCISCO

of Cabanatuan City
January 8, 1914 – December 1, 1998

On the 5th anniversary of his Rebirth to Eternal life, his wife Naty and children request for prayers for his eternal rest. We thank everyone who condoled with us in our hour of sorrow.

Masses Offered At:
St. Nicholas of Tolentine Cathedral, *Cabanatuan City*, 6:00am & 5:30pm
Dambana of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, *Cabanatuan City*, 5:30pm
Carmel of St. Therese, *4 Gilmore Ave., Q.C.*, 6:30am
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Shrine, *Broadway St., New Manila, Q.C.*, 7:00am & 6:00pm
Santuario De San Jose, *East Greenhills, Mandaluyong*, 6:15pm
Mary the Queen, *West Greenhills, San Juan*, 7:00am
Santisimo Rosario, *UST Sampaloc, Manila*, 7:00am

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PHILIPPINE COCONUT AUTHORITY
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City Tel. No.: 928-4501 to 09
Cable Address: "Philcoa" P.O. Box 3386, Manila

INVITATION TO BID

The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) is inviting offers to purchase by way of sealed bidding the property described below.

DESCRIPTION	LOCATION OF PROPERTY
17,332 Square Meters with improvements under TCT No. 20592 of the Registry of Deeds for San Pablo City	Barangay San Ignacio, San Pablo City, Province of Laguna

Bid documents shall be available upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) at the Office of the Secretariat, PCA Real Property Disposal and Appraisal Committee, 2nd Floor PCAR & D Bldg., Diliman, Quezon City from **December 1-8, 2003.**

Sealed bid proposals shall be submitted and dropped at the Bid Box located at the Office of the Secretariat before the scheduled opening of bids on **December 10, 2003** at 2:00 p.m.

Sealed bid proposals shall be opened in the presence of the participating bidders at the Executive Lounge, 6th Floor R & D Building, Diliman, Quezon City.

The sale of the property shall be on "As Is, Where Is" basis.

PCA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive any defect or informality therein and to accept such bid proposals considered advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. JOSEFEL P. GRAGEDA**
Acting Chairman
PCA Real Property Disposal & Appraisal Committee

(PDI - Nov. 29, 30 & Dec. 1, 2003)

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NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF EXCESS, UNSERVICEABLE, SCRAP AND JUNK ITEMS
"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

The National Power Corporation will conduct a re-bid for the sale of the following:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION and LOCATION	MINIMUM BID PRICE
	SCHEDULE-I BID OPENING: DEC. 11, 2003 (2:00 PM) **PLACE: MMD BIDDING ROOM, NPC HEAD OFFICE**	
1.	One (1) Lot – Excess Pipe-Casings, 319 pieces and Pipe – Fittings, Flanges, and Bolts of various size, length and thickness. Please see attached list and pictures with the Bid Forms. Located at MAKBAN GPP, BAY, LAGUNA.	P 3,010,300.00 / Lot
2.	One (1) Lot – Unserviceable Stationary Equipment, consisting of Twenty-Five (25) units, and Junk Heavy Equipment consisting of Two (2) units. Please see list and pictures with the Bid Forms. Located at PGI S/Y, NPC MAKBAN GPP, Barangay BITIN, BAY, LAGUNA.	860,000.00 / Lot
3.	One (1) Lot – Unserviceable items, approx. 172 tons (24-items) such as: Steel Plates; Pipe-Fittings; Acid-Tanks; Compressors; Cylinders; Flanges; Etc. Please see list and pictures with the Bid Forms. Located at Manila Thermal Power Plant.	5.00 / kilo
4.	One (1) Lot – Junk Items, consisting of Corroded-Drums, Air-Heater-Elements; Junk Motor Vehicles and Angle-Bars. Approx. 33 tons. Please see lists and pictures with the Bid Forms. Located at Manila Thermal Power Plant	3.00 / kilo
	SCHEDULE-II BID OPENING: DEC. 12, 2003 (2:00 PM) **PLACE: MMD BIDDING ROOM, NPC HEAD OFFICE**	
1.	One (1) Lot – Unserviceable and Cannibalized Power-Transformer and 13-segments of Stator Coils. Located at SUCAT Thermal Power Plant.	P 1,320,000.00 / Lot
2.	One (1) Lot – Unserviceable and Cannibalized GenSet, CKD, Unit No. 5 of Bantayan DPP, Bantayan Is., Cebu.	590,000.00 / Lot
3.	One (1) Lot – Unserviceable Items and Junk Diesel Parts. Approximately 15 tons. Located at Tablas DPP in Batiano, Odiongan, Romblon.	45,000.00 / Lot
4.	One (1) Lot – Unserviceable and Used Office Equipment, Computers, Printers, and Laboratory Oven. Approximately 2 tons. Located at BCFTPP, Calaca, Batangas.	6,000.00 / Lot
5.	One (1) Lot – Unserviceable and Used Tires, 170 pcs. Located at STPP, Sucat, Muntinlupa City.	3,400.00 / Lot

All bids must be submitted with the following:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2002) OF THE BIDDER OR FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY (original or BIR certified copy).

All interested parties who wish to secure bid forms must present a valid Tax Identification Card or Income Tax Return. Bid Forms at P500.00 / schedule may be secured from Mr. S.V. LOMUNTAD, Jr. at MMD, NPC Head Office, corner Agham Rd. and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C. or call tel. no. 924-5384. Deadline for issuance of bid forms is 4:30 PM December 10, 2003 for Schedule-I and December 11, 2003 for Schedule-II.

For the Materials Management Department.

FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI–Nov. 30, Dec. 1 & 2, 2003)

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ANTI-POVERTY PLAN

From frying pan to community fire

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

"WE BUILD the road, the road builds us."

That's a community saying that best sums up a current radical movement.

It's called the Kalahi-CIDSS program, which is part of the government's main anti-poverty plan. It's revolutionary because it counters the usual power play in the countryside.

A congressman often spends his pork barrel money on roads for barangays that voted for him. When constructed, they display signs bearing his name. The people then believe that the highways come from his generous heart.

It's patronage from the top.

The people decide

In contrast, Kalahi begins from the bottom. Villages look squarely at their needs and decide how to fulfill them. They write project proposals and compete for funds. Then they build and operate the projects. The whole process empowers the common folk.

Supported by a $100 million loan from the World Bank, Kalahi-CIDSS covers a fourth of the municipalities of the nation's 40 poorest provinces. It involves more than 5,300 barangays.

I accompanied government and World Bank officials to Concepcion, Iloilo, and saw this people power at work. Concepcion is a poor, isolated 4th class municipality—many of its barangays are islands.

We waded through the sea to reach an island barangay and visit a school house built by the community. Kids previously had to hike almost 3 kilometers to go to class each day. With the new Kalahi classrooms, they will be spared that burden.

Another barangay lacked potable water sources, so they set up a pumping system to serve 70 families. A third put up a health center to attend to the whole community.

Suited to basic needs

In each Kalahi project we saw a commitment to transparency. The barangays posted lots of details in their information centers: data on their minimum basic needs, project rankings, organizational charts, accounts.

Kalahi has the solid backing of Concepcion's mayor, Dr. Raul Banias, who was awarded Outstanding Municipal Mayor of the Philippines. He didn't originally come from Concepcion: he did medical service there years ago and decided to stay on.

Getting the people on board Kalahi was difficult, and the locals derisively called it "kalaha" or frying pan. But the doctor persisted, deploying vans with loudspeakers, and finally won the people over. Now they are on fire.

Facilitators convened teams to identify the needs and resources of the barangays. For example, some might be lacking in roads, others in clean water, and others in access to education. Using a checklist, each barangay team determined their most urgent needs.

The teams in Concepcion then presented their findings to their respective barangay assemblies. They ranked their problems and got feedback. After going through a workshop, the barangay teams wrote their project proposals.

The villages were required to make their own contribution to their projects. They could donate land, labor, supplies, or even funds.

Controlled by the barangay

"Sometimes the barangay captains tried to control the agenda and impose their projects on the teams," noted Alexander Glova, national project manager of Kalahi-CIDSS. "But they backed off in the presence of the barangay assembly."

The people felt the projects were truly theirs. A Concepcion resident bluntly told the mayor, "After you give your opening speech, you can no longer participate in our forum."

The highlight of the process was the day of competition. The municipality hosted a forum of its barangays, and each presented its proposals. They were judged, and the best won the funding.

It was a thrilling experience for the participants. Many had no previous experience in public speaking, so they practiced for days. At stake was far more than village pride—the speakers sought crucial projects. The losers were reported to have shed tears.

In the end, the winning projects counted 11 water supply systems, six day care centers, three health facilities, one foot bridge, one

FROM/ B2-3

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- Level 2, Expansion Mall, Alabang Town Center
- G/F, Ayala Center, Cebu

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WASHINGTON JEWELRY EMPORIUM
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- North Mall, Alabang Town Center
- G/F, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center
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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

ASP celebrates World AIDS Day

TO RAISE awareness in HIV/AIDS and its related issues during the World AIDS Day 2003, the AIDS Society of the Philippines (ASP), in partnership with the Ford Foundation Philippines, will spearhead this year's global celebration. Major sponsors are Bingo Bonanza, DKT Philippines, and the Abad Santos Madrigal Foundation.

As one of the leading AIDS organizations in the country, ASP is committed to act towards eliminating the stigma and discrimination through innovative activities in response to this global event. The society has organized a special media event to defuse the stigma and discrimination around HIV/AIDS in line with this year's slogan "Stigma and Discrimination: Live and Let Live."

This year's campaign is called "AIDS Media Awards 2003", which aims to mobilize the involvement of the local government, non-government organizations, health professionals, private sectors and media practitioners scheduled on Dec. 1 at the World Trade Center. Health Secretary Dr. Manolet Dayrit will deliver the keynote message.

A parallel photo-essay exhibit that tends to humanize HIV/AIDS in the Philippines will also be held inside the World Trade Center. It will feature photographs of those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS essayed by photojournalists who participated in this year's Best HIV/AIDS Photo-Essay category of the AIDS Media Awards.

The World AIDS Day campaign will demonstrate a multi-sectoral response to fight stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV/AIDS. It is expected to riase community awareness and understanding on the impact of AIDS, promote community support and reduce stigma and discrimination, enhance private sector mobilization in the HIV/AIDS campaign, promote caring attitudes towards persons living with HIV/AIDS, and provide opportunities to media organizations to disseminate accurate and correct information on HIV/AIDS.

THE COCA-COLA TRAVELING PAVILION

High school students from Colegio de San Juan de Letran in Calamba, Laguna, were treated to a series of audio-video presentation, lectures and exciting games as part of the Coca-Cóla Traveling Pavilion conducted recently by the pavilion staff of Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc (CCBPI). The Coca-Cola Traveling Pavilion was specially designed to allow audiences to experience the actual feel of touring the famous Coca-Cola Pavilion in Sta. Rosa. Shown is CCBPI environmental affairs specialist Hubert Adoreno explaining to high school students of Colegio San Juan de Letran in Calamba the importance of recycling and taking care of the environment as one of the segments of the Coca-Cola Traveling Pavilion.

MARITES W. MANOS
ONE MILLION PESOS

EIGHT O'CLOCK'S GRAND PRIZE WINNER

Lucky 26-year-old housewife Marites Wagas-Manos of Iligan, Mindanao (4th from left) recently bagged the grand prize of P1 million cash in Eight O'Clock's Hotline to Millions promo on GMA-&'s noontime variety show 'Eat Bulaga'. The nationwide promo garnered hundreds of thousands of entries, which according to 'Eat Bulaga', has been one of the highly successful raffle promotions conducted in its 24-year show. Manos has been an Eight O'Clock drinker for 10 years. Manos is accompanied by her mother (3rd from left) receiving her P1 million check from The Coca-Cola Export Company-Non Carbonated Beverages (TCCEC-NCB). Present during the turnover are TCCEC officers (from left) field marketing manager KV Golamco, operations director for non-carbonated beverages business unit Nolet Puno, category manager for juices Carol Kison, TCCEC marketing director Edwin Domingo, and promo and activation manager for NCB Weena Marasigan.

There's a formula to build your wealth

SO NOW you're upwardly mobile.

You're young and dynamic. You're already a professional in your respective field and climbing even higher. You're a doctor, a hotshot in the corporate world, the proprietor of a fabulous business. Whatever your profession, you're starting to hit the big time.

Yes, it's a career you have, something you need to concentrate on. That should make the other things in life take a backseat for the moment, including having to worry about your finances. Because at this time you're building a career, you should also be building your wealth.

It may sound like a monumental task, but is actually very simple. The formula is to pay yourself first.

With your paycheck or any income, always set aside the amount you want to invest. Let this amount be your first priority before any other expense. You owe this to yourself. It's a concept that makes you disciplined in your investment.

So live up the formula. And the best investment where you can live it up is the Equitable PCIBank Epic Ivory Fund.

It works like this. Put in your P100,000 or more in the Epic Ivory Fund to start building your wealth. Leave it there for five years so it can earn tax-free income.

In addition, you can opt to give periodic contributions of at least P5,000 for two years to make your money grow even bigger. Schedule it at your own pace. If excess funds become available to you, you can contribute them too. To make the income from your additional contributions tax exempt, keep them invested for five years from the date they were individually contributed.

Once your investment is ripe, you can get your P100,000 back together with its earnings and enjoy it however you wish. That dream vacation. That coveted car. That fantasy home. Or better yet, keep it in the Fund so you can be secure that your wealth continues to build. Make it your nest egg. However you want to enjoy it, it's your call.

And it's certainly a call you can make now. Ask about the Epic Ivory Fund and get to know the formula that can build your wealth. Call 891-2319, 840-7671 and 750-6292 in Metro Manila, (032)231-1131 and 231-0727 in Cebu, and (082)221-8959 in Davao.

NEW MAX'S RESTAURANT IN ILOILO CITY

Max's Franchising Inc (MFI) recently signed a franchise contract with Aguillon Ventures Inc (AVI), owner of the just opened Max's Restaurant in SM Iloilo City. Sealing the agreement with a handshake are Eduardo Aguillon (AVI) and Robert Trota (MFI). With them are MFI chief operating officer Robert Ocampo and Max's SM Iloilo managing director Filamie Aguillon. Located at the 2nd floor of SM Iloilo, Sen. Benigno Aquino Avenue, Molo, Iloilo City, Max's Restaurant became operational in October. For more information on franchising, call Max's Franchising Inc at 832-1991 local 150 and look for Lance Zafra.

Ateneo press books win National Book Awards

"THE CRITICAL Villa, Essays in Literary Criticism" by Jose Garcia Villa, compiled and edited by Jonathan Chua, "Cogito Ergo Sum and other Musings on Science", edited by Queena Lee-Chua, and "Whatever: A New Collection of Later Essays, 1987-2001" by Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, were among the winners of National Book Awards given by the Manila Critics Circle on Aug. 30 at the recently ended 24th Manila International Book Fair.

"The Critical Villa" won for Best Editing, recognizing Chua's painstaking and meticulous research work into Jose Garcia Villa's published and unpublished critiques, letters, essays. "Cogito Ergo Sum" won for Best Anthology, and features different takes on science as seen from the prisms of fiction, poetry, essay and journalism. "Whatever" won for Best Essay, and contains 91 pieces chosen from short works written over 14 years.

The award-winning books are available at the Press bookshop (426-5984), www.ateneopress.com, Popular, and Solidaridad, and may be ordered through Powerbooks.

MAMA SITA'S, A PINOY BRAND

Where there are Philippine festivals, Mama Sita's makes a strong presence. Known as the Filipino brand that promotes Filipino cuisine to the world, Mama Sita's has been a part of many Filipino celebrations where families gather to enjoy their favorite 'sinigang', 'kare-kare', 'palabok' and other sumptuous native dishes. As a truly Pinoy brand, Mama Sita's mixes and sauces celebrated the recent Kadayawan Festival in Davao City as part of its corporate mission to uphold Filipino heritage and traditions. Acting as major sponsor in a number of activities in Davao City's centerpiece event, Mama Sita's products and merchandise were on sale and display at the Agro-Trade Fair in SM City Davao, Culinary Showdown sa Davao at Gaisano Mall, and the NCCC Club Fair at Matina Town Square. Shown is the Mama Sita's booth at the Culinary Showdown sa Davao in Gaisano Mall. For more of Mama Sita's products, visit www.msita.com.

A tribute to Onib

A TRIBUTE to Onib Olmedo featuring the works of Jason Moss' "Dead Passion and Beauty Tips" opens on Dec. 12 at the 4th Floor Lobby of the Ateneo Professional Schools, 20 Rockwell Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City. The show will run until Dec. 20.

Olmedo (1937-1996) once head of the Saturday Art Group, was known for his paintings of street children, vendors, sex workers and other denizens of the big city. His portraits probe the feelings of his subjects, using distortion to great emotive effect.

Moss, inspired and influenced by Olmedo's style during his early creative years, produced for this his 10th solo show a collection of distorted figurative compositions presenting a visual treatise on contemporary urban society's obsessions.

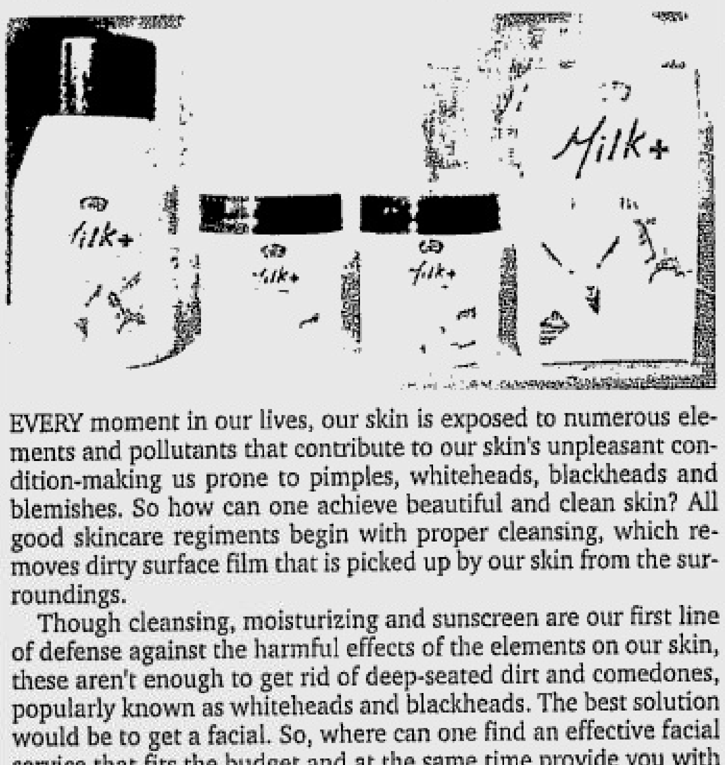
The exhibit is for the benefit of the Chief Justice Claudio Teehankee Fellowship Fund in Law and Scholarship Program for aspiring law students.

PNP AWARDS C-CUBED

The Philippine National Police recently awarded Customer Contact Center Inc (C-Cubed) a plaque of appreciation for the call center's invaluable contribution to the PNP's image-building and character improvement program. C-Cubed is the first and only ISO 9001:2000 certified contact center in the country known for actively supporting projects for local companies and offices and multinational firms. Raffy Garcia, first impressions manager for C-Cubed, receives the award from DSWD Secretary Corazon J. Soliman. She is assisted by Police Deputy Director Gen. Edgardo Aglipay and Gen. Ricardo de Leon, director for Police Community Relations at the NHQ PNP Building in Camp Crame, Quezon City. C-Cubed was acknowledged for conducting a free 3-day seminar on basic customer service.

Product FILES

Face forward with facial care



EVERY moment in our lives, our skin is exposed to numerous elements and pollutants that contribute to our skin's unpleasant condition-making us prone to pimples, whiteheads, blackheads and blemishes. So how can one achieve beautiful and clean skin? All good skincare regiments begin with proper cleansing, which removes dirty surface film that is picked up by our skin from the surroundings.

Though cleansing, moisturizing and sunscreen are our first line of defense against the harmful effects of the elements on our skin, these aren't enough to get rid of deep-seated dirt and comedones, popularly known as whiteheads and blackheads. The best solution would be to get a facial. So, where can one find an effective facial service that fits the budget and at the same time provide you with products to maintain the health and beauty of your skin? HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives offers a great solution-for a minimum purchase of HBC's Body Recipe line for skin care, customers are entitled to a free facial. This relaxing and refreshing facial experience is only available at selected HBC stores with an exclusive service area.

HBC's Body Recipe is a complete line of natural skin care products inspired by natural, homegrown beauty recipes designed for a woman's unique beauty needs at the same time providing a more affordable alternative to high-priced and imported natural-based products. HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives introduces two of its skin care products that help your skin achieve that clean and healthy feel and at the same time whitens and smoothens dry and rough skin. Body Recipe Milk Plus Body Bar and Body Lotion let you enjoy the healthy goodness of milk on your skin. It is made with goat's milk-proven to maintain your skin's moisture balance resulting in smoother and softer skin.

Bits & Clips

Negros artists at SM

AN EXHIBITION of recent artworks by three artists from Negros Occidental will be featured at the SM Art Center, SM Megamall Building A, Mandaluyong City beginning Dec. 2. Titled "Raga-ak: Black Artists in Asia Exhibition", this exhibit will showcase works of Nunelucio Alvarado, Charlie Co and Dennis Ascalon. Presented by Balay Taliambong: The Cojuangco Museum and Art Center, in cooperation with Finale Art Gallery, this exhibit is also supported by Cebu Pacific Air and Asian Tigers Lane Moving and Storage. The show will be on view until Dec. 15. For more information, call Finale Art Gallery at 634-2410.

Spice up 'barkada nights'

WARM up your December nights. Maggi Savor Chili Garlic Seasoning, in cooperation with Dencio's Restaurants, holds the "Maggi Savor Nights" at Dencio's branches metro wide. If you're hot enough for this sizzling evening, then you better be part of the "Hot Charades" and "Fiery Factor" party games that will surely spice up your barkada nights. Groups can win Chili-inspired T-shirts, shades, and gift certificates from apparel, sports and music stores. The event will kick off in Dencio's Rockwell on Dec. 5 and continues in Alabang on Dec. 6, Eastwood on Dec. 12, and Morato on Dec. 13. Latin house music by a guest DJ and the HOT Chili Girls will be on hand to add spice and flavor to the affair. Maggi also introduces its "Barkada Meal"-for every purchase of Dencio's Sari-Sari Sinugba Platter, customers get a free pitcher of Nestle Pink Lemonade and Nestle Kitkat. The meal promo is ongoing until Dec. 19.

Nat'l leadership confab

THE INTERNATIONAL Movement of Development Managers (IMDM), in partnership with Winning Ideas and Strategies in Development Management (Wisdom) and Integrated Greenearth Systems Corp (IGSC), mounts a National Leadership Conference from Dec. 1 to 3 at the AIM Conference Center, SGV Hall, Makati City. Titled "Building a Community of Leaders and Organizations through Good Governance," the conference unites the movers and shakers of the public and private sectors. The IMDM is an organization composed of graduates of AIM Master in Development Management (MDM) program. It has 629 members from 28 countries, 253 members from the Philippines. For inquiries on the National Leadership Conference, call 753-2006.

SOCIAL UPLIFTMENT PROGRAM, TAKE 2

The public affairs group of AFPResCom conducted for the second time a social upliftment program with medical, dental, optical, deworming, and milkfeeding operation in Laguna-home of the 202nd Infantry Brigade 2nd Infantry Division benefiting approximately 800 residents in the area. Shown in a milkfeeding and nutrition operation are Col. Jess Cabarrus (PAF) Commander PAG, Major Gaudioso Manalo (JAGS) PA, Col. Tony Sebastian (PAF) and TSgt. Pamado (PAF).

Prospects of credit supplementation in the global economy

(Second of two parts)

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Jesus G. Tirona

IN MARCH 1998, the private financial community heeded the government's call. The Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP), together with its minority partner, the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), established the LGU Guarantee Corporation (LGUGC) to "bridge" that gap between the LGUs and the capital market by providing guarantee cover for LGU indebtedness. Many LGUs had well-conceived development plans but were at a loss as to how to get them implemented. The understanding was that the LGUs are also economic enterprises (like SMEs) capable of identifying and executing impact projects that are profitable, labor and employment generating and stimulating SME activities in the locality. LGUGC's vision is to develop the LGU bond market in the Philippines via its credit supplementation.

The credit enhancement provided by LGUGC "de-politicized" the relationship between the LGUs and the private sources of capital. When a call is made, LGUGC would step into the debtor's shoes in much the same way as any ACSIC member institution would address a call on its guarantee. The big difference though is that in LGUGC's case, the LGU indebtedness is enhanced at 100 percent as compared to the risk-sharing schemes of most credit guarantees. This is so because the LGU bond market is in its nascent stage and public investors have yet to develop its confidence level on the LGU issuer and, more importantly, on the enhancer, the LGUGC.

Infrastructure

It has taken LGUGC all these past five years to lay the groundwork for LGU debt financing. Prevailing market imperfections gave LGUGC every reason to pursue much-needed and timely government interventions if only to entice a reluctant private sector community to take a second look at a new breed of borrowers. Today, the LGUGC is seeing the number of market players increase as specialized roles begin to evolve. First in line is the Financial Advisor (FA) who is signed up by the LGU to assist in preparing feasibility studies and the eventual financial packaging conventionally on a "no cure-no pay" basis.

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Yet to surface in the market place is a dedicated bond counsel whose sole responsibility will be to serve the interest of the bondholder/investor. Likewise, a stand-alone LGU ratings organization has yet to be established. In the interim, LGUGC conducts its internal credit screening and rating systems following international standards. The actual rating process is contracted out and an independent ratings committee—comprised of academics, bankers, management executives—does the actual rating. LGUGC looks forward to the day when a Fixed Income Exchange will be finally established in the country and LGUGC-enhanced credit-rated bonds are traded in the secondary market.

Platform for SMEs

In 1999, LGUGC's initial efforts resulted in a breakthrough when the first-ever revenue bond was issued for an abattoir upgrade. This was followed shortly by other enterprising LGUs various projects such as low-cost housing, public markets, commercial buildings, hospital, a convention center cum lodging facilities, an academic center and a multi-purpose gymnasium, and commercial complex with toll parking facility.

If one were to track on a macro level the multiplier effects of just one project like the P220 million Convention Center south of Manila, myriad jobs and business revenues were generated during conception and design of the project to its construction and operating phases. Many suppliers benefited such as: construction materials for convention hall and lodging facilities, audio-visual and computer equipment, furnitures and fixtures including the installation of electricity, water and communication lines, and cooling systems among other. To operate the Center, more SME services were tapped such as a private hotel management group, food catering, janitorial and laundry, sewage and garbage disposal, shuttle, training courses in hotel operations, and insurance to name a few. Tourism in the area has likewise been boosted.

Prospects

It is apparent from my discussions that credit supplementation will continue to play a crucial role in the future, especially in developing and third world economies. The advent of the borderless global economy makes it imperative for these countries to strengthen major internal economic structures and players such as the SMEs and the LGUs. Obviously, these players cannot yet make their mark without credit enhancement.

Looking at the crystal ball, I see an increased alliance between the government and private sectors toward ensuring the flow of much needed capital to priority sectors. Countries with non-existent guarantee facilities for SMEs or LGU debts will see the value of establishing such. It will not be long until we have associations like chambers of industries and likewise of SMEs or LGUs establishing mutual guarantee funds for self-help. But such efforts can only succeed with adequate policy initiatives and incentives from the national government or its agencies.

I also anticipate inter-agency collaboration among guarantee institutions from different nations, especially those within regional groups. ACSIC members, for example, can re-insure each other's risks to assist businesses operating in more than one country and at the same time, widening portfolio distribution and therefore also spreading and diversifying risks. The scenario I just drew implies the need for financial innovations. I now challenge the ACSIC members to collectively be creative and be the leader in global financial restructuring. *(The author is the President/CEO of LGU Guarantee Corp. This article contained the speech delivered by the author during the 16th ACSIC Conference on Nov. 13, 2003 at Makati Shangri-La. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)*

'Art of raising funds, science of making it grow'

EQUITABLE PCI Bank is doing its part to aid schools, religious groups, and non-profit organizations advance their causes and projects by helping them hone their skills at raising and managing funds.

The Philippines' non-profit sector is one of the most lively and dynamic in Asia with an estimated 320,000 charitable trusts, foundations, and NGOs. However, non-profits have had a more difficult time sustaining operations with much fewer foreign and corporate donations than in the 1980s.

In response, the Trust Banking Group of the country's third largest bank gathered some of the most notable experts in the area of fund-raising and fund management and had them share their knowledge and experience with cause-oriented institutions in a special investment forum recently in Makati City.

Experts from Equitable PCI Bank's Trust Banking Group, recognized for its fund management acumen, lent their expertise and walked the audience through the best investment strategies to help them stretch their funds at the forum scheduled from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on Nov. 17 at the Manila Shangri-La Hotel. No less than president & Chief Executive Rene J. Buenaventura opened the affair.

Dubbed "The Art of Raising Funds, The Science of Making it Grow, the seminar was structured to help them effectively pursue their advocacy. It featured authorities on fund-raising known for their extraordinary sense of commitment and social responsibility.

Among them is Mayan Quebral, the executive director of Venture for Fund Raising who spoke on the Principles of Successful Fund Raising. Mayan, a pioneer in the field of fund raising, managed the largest non-profit direct mail campaign in the country with P85 million raised in less than four years. The former UNICEF Resource Development Officer conducted the very first survey of gift-giving attitudes in the Philippines.

Dickie Soriano, founder of award-winning direct marketing firm BCD Pinpoint, talked on Direct Response Advertising as a tool in raising funds.

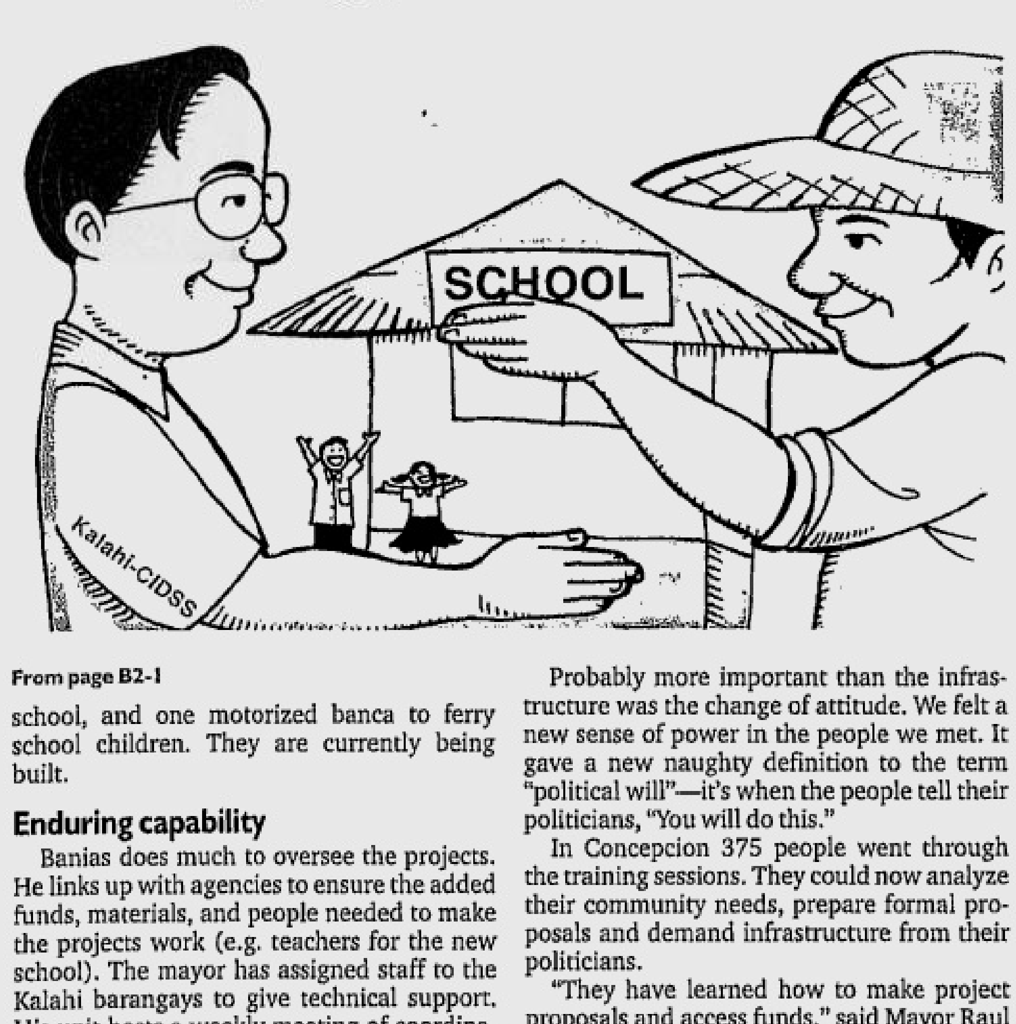
Dickie, concurrently managing director of OgilvyOne, won Gold in the 1996 Asia Direct Marketing Awards for his work for UNICEF. His firm, BCD Pinpoint, is the first Filipino agency to win first prize at the Caples Awards in New York, winning last February for its work with the Philippine Animal Welfare Society.

Kahlil Bagatsing, the marketing director of Make-a-Wish-Foundation, spoke on how the foundation evolved since its birth in the Philippines and how organizational reengineering has allowed them to raise more funds to help more children with life-threatening illnesses.

The forum touched on the proper stewardship of financial resources. Peter Clemente, vice president at Equitable PCI Bank's Trust Banking Group, discussed practical investment strategies to maximize an organization's financial resources. A seasoned fund manager, Pete's career spans 11 years, half of which was spent abroad. He is currently in charge of investment decisions for P80-billion worth of trust funds in the Bank. He shared insights into the best investments given economic conditions and corporate objectives of the fund-raiser, and also guided the audience into seeing investment opportunities where there are seemingly none.

Equitable PCI Bank is celebrating its 53rd anniversary this year. It is presently the country's third largest bank, enjoying leadership in corporate and commercial banking, credit and payment cards, remittances, leasing, and investment banking. It has over 400 branches and more than 400 FASTeller ATMs nationwide, with access to 4,000 BancNet, MegaLink, and ExpressNet ATMs.

From frying pan . . .



From page B2-1

school, and one motorized banca to ferry school children. They are currently being built.

Enduring capability

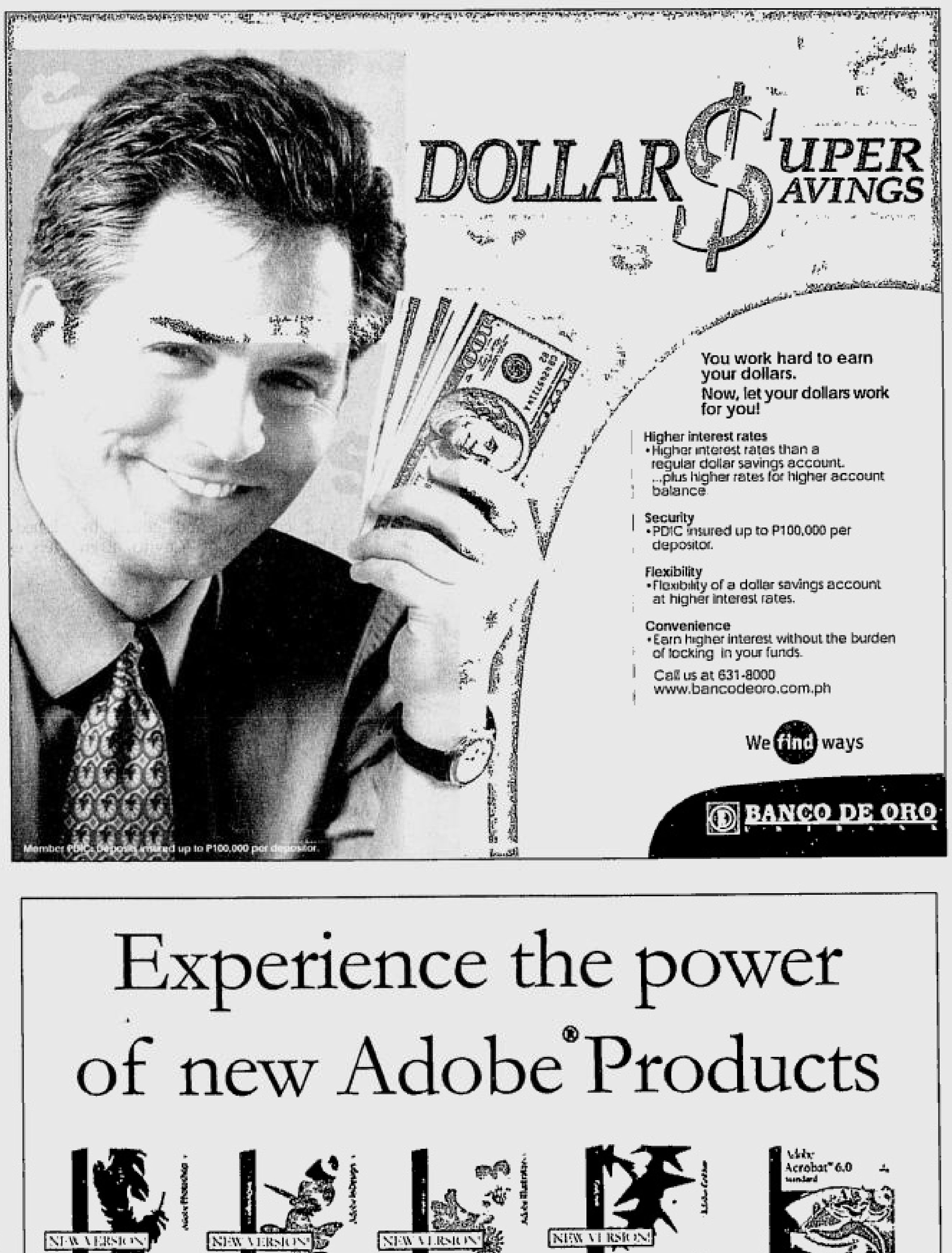
Banias does much to oversee the projects. He links up with agencies to ensure the added funds, materials, and people needed to make the projects work (e.g. teachers for the new school). The mayor has assigned staff to the Kalahi barangays to give technical support. His unit hosts a weekly meeting of coordinators to monitor progress. He has also integrated the bottom-up Kalahi system into his planning cycle.

Probably more important than the infrastructure was the change of attitude. We felt a new sense of power in the people we met. It gave a new naughty definition to the term "political will"—it's when the people tell their politicians, "You will do this."

In Concepcion 375 people went through the training sessions. They could now analyze their community needs, prepare formal proposals and demand infrastructure from their politicians.

"They have learned how to make project proposals and access funds," said Mayor Raul N. Banias, MD. "That capability will remain long after Kalahi is over."

Comments to <darroyo@philonline.com>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Date	Time	City	Venue
12 Dec	8am to 12pm	Manila	The Peninsula Manila Hotel Garcia Villa, Balagtas and Balmori Function Rooms

Agenda:
0800 - 0830 Registration
0830 - 1200 Keynotes and Demo of Creative Suite (Photoshop CS, Illustrator CS, InDesign CS, Golive CS and Version Cue)

To register, Please contact Irish Gimenez at (63)-2-8127666 ext 178.
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'Art of raising funds, science of making it grow'

EQUITABLE PCI Bank is doing its part to aid schools, religious groups, and non-profit organizations advance their causes and projects by helping them hone their skills at raising and managing funds.

The Philippines' non-profit sector is one of the most lively and dynamic in Asia with an estimated 320,000 charitable trusts, foundations, and NGOs. However, non-profits have had a more difficult time sustaining operations with much fewer foreign and corporate donations than in the 1980s.

In response, the Trust Banking Group of the country's third largest bank gathered some of the most notable experts in the area of fund-raising and fund management and had them share their knowledge and experience with cause-oriented institutions in a special investment forum recently in Makati City.

Experts from Equitable PCI Bank's Trust Banking Group, recognized for its fund management acumen, lent their expertise and walked the audience through the best investment strategies to help them stretch their funds at the forum scheduled from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on Nov. 17 at the Manila Shangri-La Hotel. No less than president & Chief Executive Rene J. Buenaventura opened the affair.

Dubbed "The Art of Raising Funds, The Science of Making it Grow, the seminar was structured to help them effectively pursue their advocacy. It featured authorities on fund-raising known for their extraordinary sense of commitment and social responsibility.

Among them is Mayan Quebral, the executive director of Venture for Fund Raising who spoke on the Principles of Successful Fund Raising. Mayan, a pioneer in the field of fund raising, managed the largest non-profit direct mail campaign in the country with P85 million raised in less than four years. The former UNICEF Resource Development Officer conducted the very first survey of gift-giving attitudes in the Philippines.

Dickie Soriano, founder of award-winning direct marketing firm BCD Pinpoint, talked on Direct Response Advertising as a tool in raising funds.

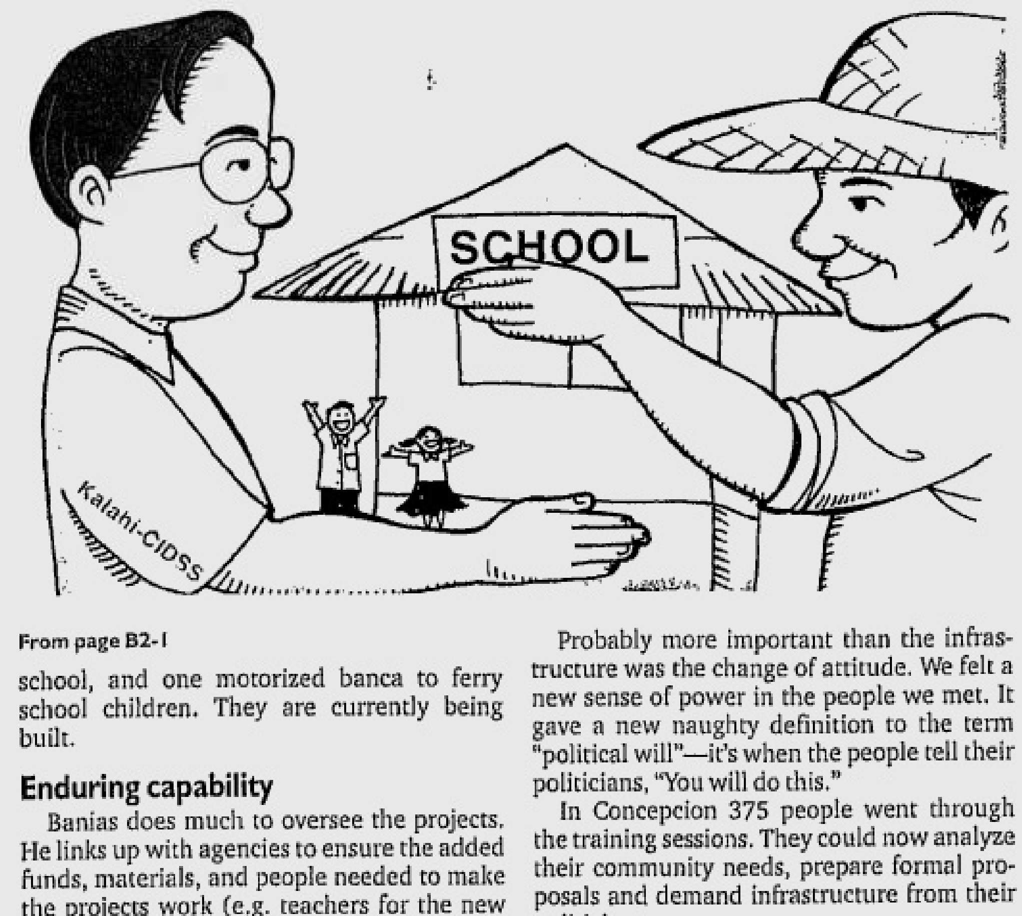
Dickie, concurrently managing director of OgilvyOne, won Gold in the 1996 Asia Direct Marketing Awards for his work for UNICEF. His firm, BCD Pinpoint, is the first Filipino agency to win first prize at the Caples Awards in New York, winning last February for its work with the Philippine Animal Welfare Society.

Kahlil Bagatsing, the marketing director of Make-a-Wish-Foundation, spoke on how the foundation evolved since its birth in the Philippines and how organizational reengineering has allowed them to raise more funds to help more children with life-threatening illnesses.

The forum touched on the proper stewardship of financial resources. Peter Clemente, vice president at Equitable PCI Bank's Trust Banking Group, discussed practical investment strategies to maximize an organization's financial resources. A seasoned fund manager, Pete's career spans 11 years, half of which was spent abroad. He is currently in charge of investment decisions for P80-billion worth of trust funds in the Bank. He shared insights into the best investments given economic conditions and corporate objectives of the fund-raiser, and also guided the audience into seeing investment opportunities where there are seemingly none.

Equitable PCI Bank is celebrating its 53rd anniversary this year. It is presently the country's third largest bank, enjoying leadership in corporate and commercial banking, credit and payment cards, remittances, leasing, and investment banking. It has over 400 branches and more than 400 FASTeller ATMs nationwide, with access to 4,000 BancNet, MegaLink, and ExpressNet ATMs.

From frying pan . . .



From page B2-1

school, and one motorized banca to ferry school children. They are currently being built.

Enduring capability

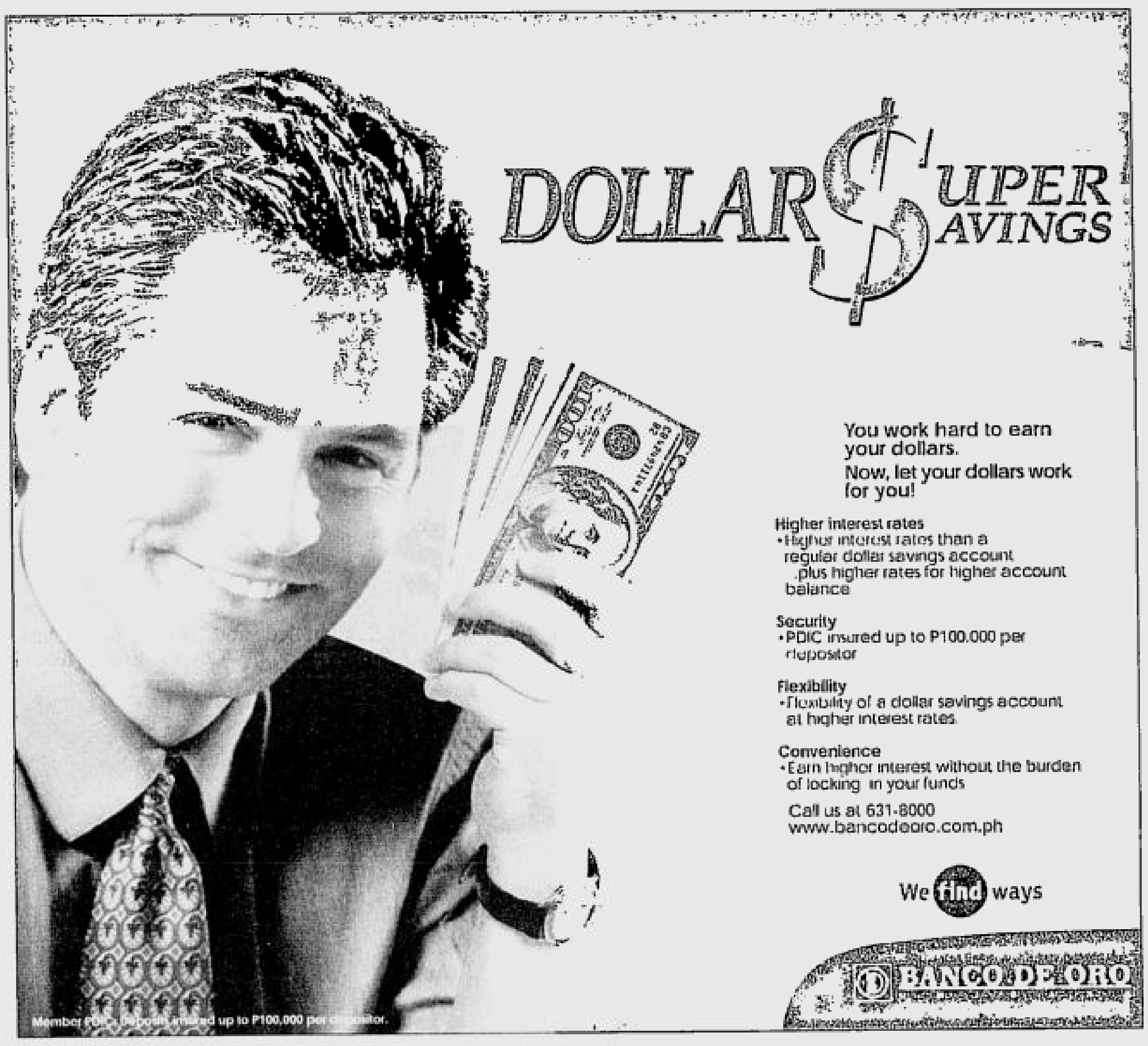
Banias does much to oversee the projects. He links up with agencies to ensure the added funds, materials, and people needed to make the projects work (e.g. teachers for the new school). The mayor has assigned staff to the Kalahi barangays to give technical support. His unit hosts a weekly meeting of coordinators to monitor progress. He has also integrated the bottom-up Kalahi system into his planning cycle.

Probably more important than the infrastructure was the change of attitude. We felt a new sense of power in the people we met. It gave a new naughty definition to the term "political will"—it's when the people tell their politicians, "You will do this."

In Concepcion 375 people went through the training sessions. They could now analyze their community needs, prepare formal proposals and demand infrastructure from their politicians.

"They have learned how to make project proposals and access funds," said Mayor Raul N. Banias, MD. "That capability will remain long after Kalahi is over."

Comments to <darroyo@philonline.com>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Your funds may be in NY but updates come from Manila

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

THAT the Philippines is fast becoming a hub for call centers is already a known fact.

People from all over the world dial a toll free number and a Filipino answers their call. The callers do not know they are talking to non-Americans. But the business gets done.

A new trend is emerging that carries the same principle as call centers. But this time, it is a more sophisticated operation that involves providing the backroom systems that manage the servicing of millions of dollars worth of investments.

Fund managers handle tons of money. And the key to their success is to choose the right investment products and mix to give the best yields to their clients.

But the reality is that as the number of client grows, so do the headaches in managing the paperwork and the maturity dates or even just the updates of each account.

This is a growing trend in the international market. To enhance the efficiency of fund managers, they outsource their backroom operations.

There are only two such companies providing such service right now in the Philipines. One is the RG Asset Management Services Ltd (Phils.) Inc.

UNILAB appoints RG Asset Management Services (RG-AMS) as its independent provider for the administrative requirements of the Unilab's Board of Trustees' Bayanihan Savings Plan. (From left) Bayanihan Savings Plan Employee Council's vice chair Ramon Alegre and chair Jose Navarro; RG-AMS chair Crihil Ibañez; president Julieta Lagmay.

RGAMS Philippines provides the backroom needs of RG Asset Management Co. (RG AMCO), an asset management firm based in Hong Kong set up in 1998.

RG AMCO is made up of former executives from Goldman Sachs, Merrill Lynch, and JP Morgan as well as international organizations such as Deutsche Bank, Mitsui Trust, Bankers Trust and JP Morgan.

RGAMS Philippines president and CEO Julieta C. Lagmay explains that although they were set up to service RG AMCO, they have the capacity to service the backroom needs of local firms.

They use a specially developed softweare that can service both a foreign and a local client's needs.

She points out that what has been happening is that many trust departments of banks in the country get bogged down with doing the paperwork on their clients investments. Reports have to be churned out regularly. Clients want to update statements of their investments.

Lagmay says her firm's job is to take away this load from local firms and allow them to focus more on investing and marketing their services.

But Lagmay says the edge of their firm is that it has the capacity to make the reports available on a daily basis in the Internet.

This is applicable for loan programs and the reports can of course only be accessed upon the keying of a password.

RGAMS Philippines provides participant record-keeping, participant/employer reporting, loan administration, distribution process, contribution calculation, plan design.

Recently they signed an agreement with United Laboratories to its independent provider for the administrative requirements of the UNILAB Board of Trustees' Bayanihan Savings Plan.

The top officials of RGAMS Philippines came from the former Far East Bank and Trust Co. (which merged with the Bank of the Philippine Islands).

Its chair is Crihil Ibanez, an equity derivative specialist with experience in global emerging markets.

Lagmay used to head the Asset Management Department of FEBTC.

The group's senior adviser is Corazon M. Buenconsejo, a former executive trust officer of FEBTC.

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What is the difference between canapés and hors d'oeuvres?

GOODNESS GRACES

Lia S. Bernardo

Q: WHAT is the difference between canapés and hors d'oeuvres? Can they be used interchangeably?

A: Canapés (ka-na-pays) are finger foods that are passed around while you are waiting for dinner. It is served with cocktails. An hors d'oeuvre (or-derv), is the first course of your meal. It is served to you while you are already seated on the table. For example, smoked salmon on toast passed around while you are having cocktails and waiting for dinner to be served is a canapé while smoked salmon with lemon caper sauce served to you as a first course once you are already seated at the dinner table is an hors d'oeuvre. In American dining etiquette the word canapé is hardly ever used, the word hors d'oeuvres is used both for finger foods and the first course, meaning appetizers in general.

Q: I am a junior officer at the Department of Foreign Affairs and recently I attended a diplomatic dinner at a private residence. One of the more senior officers with the rank of ambassador ordered a beer once we were received and seated at the sala. Then when the beer came he asked for a glass of ice. When the ice was given to him, he poured the beer into the glass with ice and used his finger to stir. Furthermore, during the sit down dinner he again asked for a glass of ice. He took the ice from the glass with his fingers and put the ice cube into his red wine...and again stirred it with his fingers. To top all of this off, he burped after dinner. I just thought I would share this with you because as a future representative of our country abroad, it is appalling to think that some diplomats who represent our country do not have even basic manners. Our hosts and the other guests kept quiet and pretended not to notice.

Thank you for your letter. Many people have argued with me that etiquette is too "prim and proper," that it is "put on" and just for appearances. This example of why knowing the proper way of doing things or just developing basic manners is so essential whether we are building social, business or in this matter diplomatic relationships. How you act speaks volumes about you as a person. And since most "getting to know you" events revolve around cocktails, lunches and dinners, most mistakes occur around meals. As you clearly illustrated, going against the rules of etiquette leaves everyone in the room extremely uncomfortable. Your hosts and the other guests were well mannered enough not to react, but you can be sure that the person of whom you were speaking was in fact ridiculed or at the very least talked about right after that dinner. Rank does not automatically give you manners, etiquette is learned, it isn't inborn. One must take the initiative to learn the proper ways of doing things because it is simply essential and crucial to how people will see you, judge you and form an opinion about you. In personal relationships it is who you are as a person that counts, unfortunately in business, one hardly gets the opportunity to get to know the person that you are and thus, it is the image that you project that is the basis for continued dealings or going to your competition. Hopefully the person you are referring to takes a class in etiquette or reads up on basic table manners before he continues to offend those with whom he dines.

Maps that show where you can put your money into

TO ENCOURAGE investors to take a second look at what Mindanao has to offer, the United States Agency for Internatonal Development through its Growth for Equity in Mindanao (GEM) II Program has drawn investment hunter's maps to guide them to what the region has to offer.

The colored maps formally launched in last months's Mindanao Business Congress chronicle investment opportunities in each province or island in Mindanao.

The investment maps, says John Dalton GEM's deputy chief of party, offer a complete list for private investors seeking business opportunities in Mindanao.

"The maps summarizes what kind of business may click in these provinces," said Dalton. "The maps are designed to help spur increased business activity in Mindanao."

There are seven maps in all - one Mindanao-wide and six economic growth zone maps (Northern Mindanao, Western Mindanao, Central Mindanao, Davao Gulf, SOCSKSARGEN and Caraga).

The maps could be useful investment tools that contain updated and accurate information on investment opportunities in every area, locations of major industries and agriculture and aquaculture production areas, infrastructure (road networks, seaports, airports and major sea-air routes telecommunications, industrial parks), tourism sites, and land use classification.

The island of Camiguin for instance offers investment opportunities in eco-tourism and recreation facilities, fast ferry services, terminal and port services, ice plant and cold storage facilities, agro-food processing and even retirement villages. While in the province of Misamis Oriental, bulk handling facilities for grains and fertilizer and even an agribusiness park are also needed in the province.

Foreign donors such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and other donor-countries including the US have signified interest in putting in more investments on the island through development projects.

It would be recalled that President Bush promised $30 million to Mindanao on top of the US government's existing program if peace talks between the government and Moro rebels succeed.

Dalton said there is no definite plan as to where the new aid would go but explained that it would likely be used within the framework of existing initiatives in the region.

USAID currently supports GEM II an institutional and infrastructure program funded by $59 million grant that supports 500 small production and transport-related projects all over the island in the next five years. It is the second phase of GEM I implemented in the late '90's that received $27 million from the US government.

Christine A. Gaylican

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Camino

REVILLA: Still undecided AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

BONG A LAKAS LOYALIST

'FPJ understands'

By Nini Valera

ACTOR Bong Revilla and presidéntial wannabe Fernando Poe Jr. have already talked on the cell phone about their political differences, according to the former Cavite governor.

"He understood my position," Bong told INQUIRER Entertainment after the press conference of his latest movie, "Captain Barbel," last Saturday.

Bong is with Lakas-CMD, President Macapagal-Arroyo's party. FPJ, who is running as an opposition candidate, has yet to be sworn in as a member of any political party.

Bong said that during their cell phone conversation FPJ had told him: "Bong, *maliwanag naman*. You know me, *hindi naman ako makitid ang utak.* It would look funny *naman kung kakampi ka sa akin.* I know you're there *naman.*(It's clear to me. You know that I'm not narrow-minded. It would look funny if you would side with me.)"

But Bong admitted he still finds himself in a fix.

"*Talagang naiipit ako* (I am really caught in the middle)," he said.

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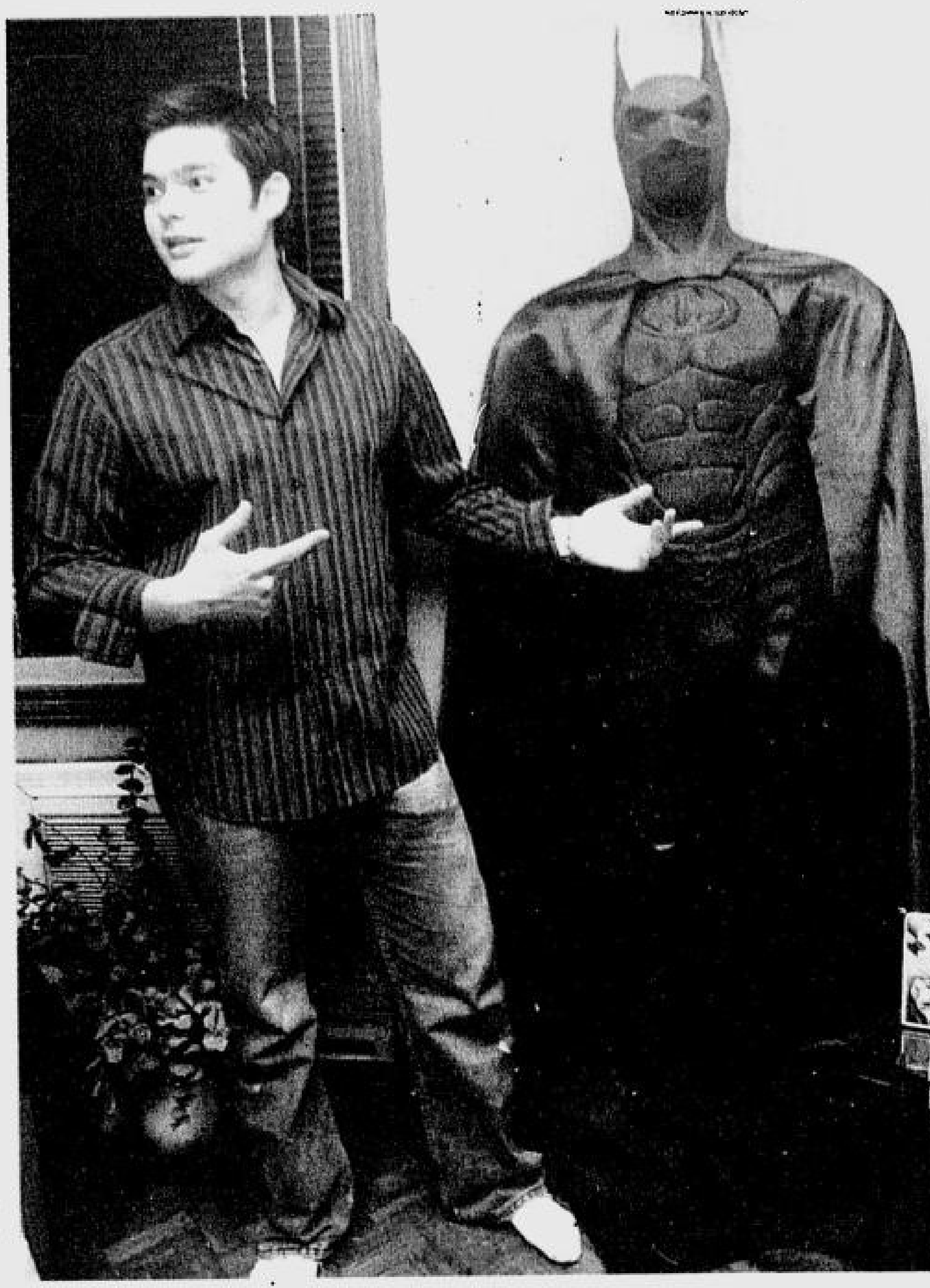


DANTES says he moved heaven and earth to acquire his Batman costume, a treasured piece, along with a Wolverine creation (left) by Eric Pineda.

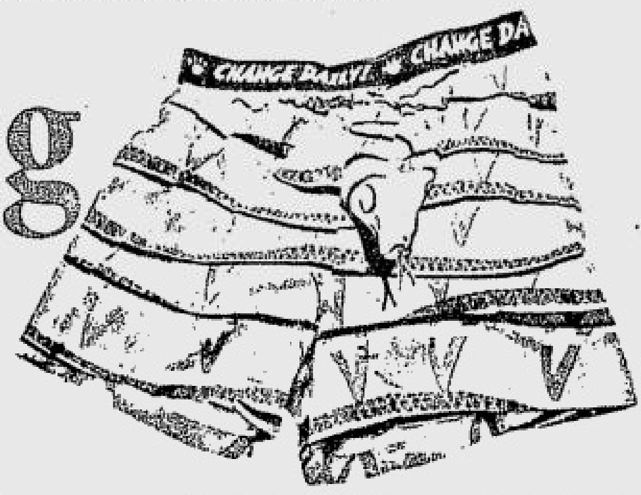
TOYS of the past like this Superman doll and costumes are part of Dantes' super hero collection.

FOR footwear, Dantes prefers subdued hues like beige and brown.

Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

OUT OF THE CLOSET

Dingdong and his super friends



BOXER shorts as sleep wear for the actor who owns about 60 suits.

By Marinel R. Cruz

ACTOR and television host Dingdong Dantes dreamt of being a super hero while he was growing up. He used to attend children's parties wearing the latest Superman, Batman, Spiderman or Captain America costumes.

As he grew older, Dingdong's fascination with super hero costumes turned into a passion for collecting action figures, not only of his favorite comic book characters but also of horror movie personalities like Freddie Krueger of "Nightmare on Elm Street" and Jason of "Friday the 13th."

"I buy every action figure I could get my hands on," says Dingdong, as he ushers INQUIRER Entertainment into his bedroom in the three-story Dantes home in Quezon City. "I used to have a lot of G. I. Joe and Superman stuff, but I gave most of them to my little brother."

But Dingdong still keeps a large collection in his room, most prominent of which is the life-sized Batman that he says he had to move heaven and earth to get.

"I was able to have it shipped here from the States. This is quite new, I just had this last year," he says of his Batman toy. "It is by far the most expensive toy I've ever bought."

His next goal is to buy a life-sized Predator, a character from the movie of the same title that featured newly elected California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. "It's made of metal," he explains. "Buying one won't be too hard because I've already seen a couple in local toy stores."

Dingdong started doing television commercials when he was three. He joined the Abstract dancers at 15. Three years later, Dingdong became part of GMA 7's youth-oriented show "TGIS," with Angelu de Leon and Bobby Andrews.

On weeknights, Dingdong is seen opposite Tanya Garcia in the soap series "Twin Hearts" on GMA 7. He also hosts the network's newest reality-based talent search "Star Struck" with Nancy Castiglione.

This December, Dingdong will be seen in the big screen in "Malikmata," Canary Films' entry to the Metro Manila Film Festival this year. He plays a murder suspect in this suspense-thriller directed by Jose Javier Reyes. Even if he was not the original choice to play the role, Dingdong says he couldn't care less, "as long as I get to work again with director Reyes," who had directed the actor before in two movies.

"There's a shocking twist to the story," said Dingdong of "Malikmata," which also stars Rica Peralejo and Marvin Agustin.

Dingdong, who's trying to finish his degree at the Ateneo University, has also found time to direct the weekly fantasy-adventure series "Kakabakaba Adventures" on GMA 7. Directing the show is like making his beloved comic book characters come alive, according to Dingdong.

"I really enjoy my work in 'Kakabakaba.' Actually, it's the closet thing I could get to my dream of directing a sequel to 'Underworld,'" he said.

Len Wiseman's "Underworld," the vampires-and-werewolves adventure flick that features British actress Kate Beckinsale, was shown in local theaters last October.

Dingdong still has in his closet, the "Wolverine" outfit made for him by designer Eric Pineda several years ago for a pictorial for the cover of a notebook. Also hanging inside his closet is the "Matrix" suit he wore during the last 'SOP' Halloween special.

Dingdong, who says he has over 50 suits, showed INQUIRER Entertainment some of his favorites, like the pinstriped suit he got from Paul Cabral, "because I love imagining myself as a mafia."

"I also have my regular tux, which people would soon see me wearing in my movie with Jolina (Magdangal)—'Annie Batumbakal.' I first wore this in a Nyork fashion show. This is memorable to me because I hardly do fashion shows. I think this was part of Nyork's wedding line."

Formal suits. "I want all my suits in black. I go for the classic look. I don't feel comfortable wearing something too outrageous."

Neckties. "My favorite tie is from Hugo Boss. It's memorable because I bought it with my own money. I was only 17 then. I bought it because I had to attend a debut party."

"Ties have to match the color and style of your suits. You must not wear a striped necktie with a striped suit. The necktie has to be of the exact length. Its fold must touch your belt's buckle."

Belt. "Its black, it's thick and it has a black buckle. It can be worn on any occasion. I've had it for two years now."

Motocross gear. "I was 20 when I first got into motocross racing. I met motocross champ Jayvee Andrews, a brother of (actor) Bobby Andrews. I got all the tips from him. *Kung saan-saan kami nakarating.* I never joined any competition but I used to participate in races within my group. We called our group Guadini.

"A good racer is someone who doesn't fear pain. It's a dangerous sport. You must have a reliable helmet and a strong pair of boots. Be sure to wear your elbow, knee and chest protectors."

Nightwear. "I only wear simple *pambahay* clothes to bed. I sleep with no shirt on sometimes, but I like wearing boxer shorts. It's comfortable."

Jacket. "My dad gave me one of his camouflage jackets, which I used playing war games with my friends. This is an authentic US army jacket. It even has a tag with a serial number. *Pang-gera talaga 'to.* My dad must have had this since the early '80s."

Jeans. "I like my jeans old, faded and torn. This is from Armani. I'm very particular with the fit. My jeans have to be straight cut. I don't want them too baggy."

Shoes. "I prefer my shoes in beige, tan and brown because these colors go well with both casual and formal clothes.

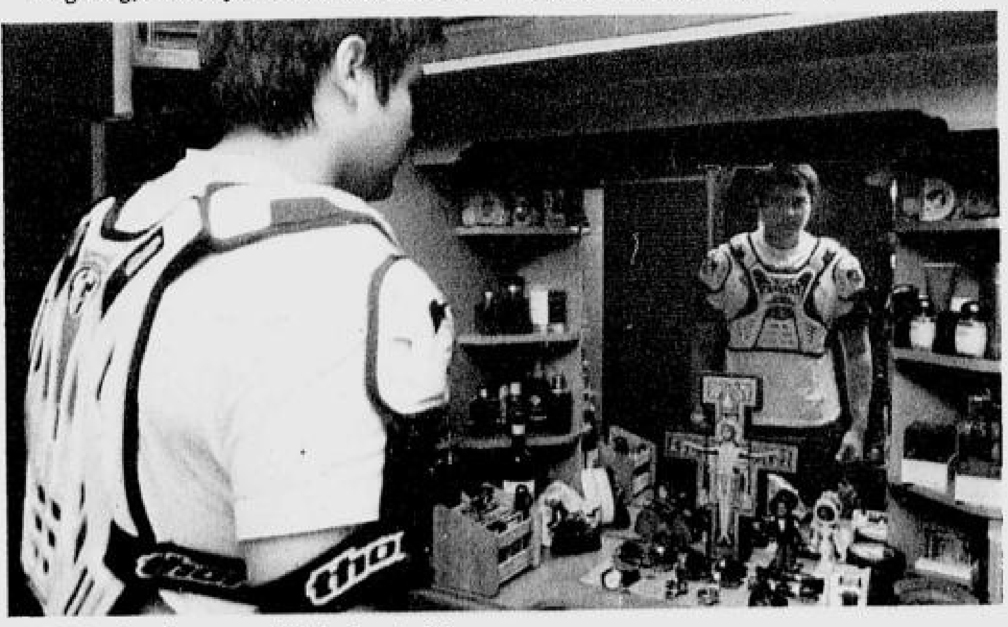
"I wear loafers with my suits only when the occasion is really formal. Most of the time, I wear my black boots.

"I use my Jordan rubber shoes when I go to the gym. This pair was given to me by a good friend, Ricky Chua of Arena. I love going to the gym. But sadly, my busy schedule now keeps me from working out regularly."

Eyeglasses. "All my shades can be worn on both casual and formal events. My favorite pair of eyeglasses has a metal frame. *Pwede din sporty ito.*"

Watches. "This black Diesel sports watch is my favorite. I like the design, it's not too futuristic and outrageous. I also like it because it was given to me by a special someone during my birthday."

Perfumes. "I like Bulgari and Hugo Boss Dark Blue. Perfumes with very strong scents must not be used during casual occasions, *kung ayaw mong maging O.A.* (over acting)."



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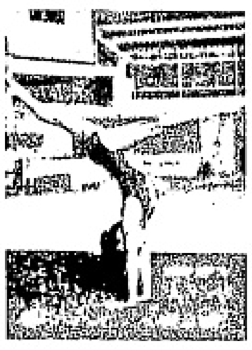
GO FOR GOLD, TEAM PHILIPPINES!

The quest for the prized gold medal continues as the 22nd Southeast Asian (SEA) Games kicks off in Vietnam this year.

MILO, the official energy drink of the SEA Games, awaits and joins the entire country with bated breath as members of Team Philippines start their battles in their respective disciplines en route to that prized gold mint that is equated not only to fame and greatness but glory as well.

The December edition of the biennial meet provides the perfect avenue for our local sporting heroes to strut their stuff and pit their skills against some of Southeast Asia's bests.

The long hours spent in tedious training and intense preparation will be finally put into test, and the SEA Games, without a doubt, is the most-important event in the 2003 sporting calendar.



MILO, together with the rest of the country, supports Team Philippines as it renews its crusade in bringing home the gold.

It is no secret that in any sporting event, it takes more than effort to succeed and excel. Hence, the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) and the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) have joined hands in supporting the athletes every step of the way.

The support comes in various forms -- from issuing sports equipment that would enhance their training, to fielding them off in international tourneys that would gauge the level of their skill. Local sports officials also lead the supporting cast when the SEA Games finally opens shop, goading and cheering the Philippine delegation towards the goal, of which is a gold medal.

This time, a triumvirate of sorts is formed when MILO joins the partnership and gives that extra effort to inspire and motivate the SEA Games' cast.

An athlete should polish his potential to bring out the skill that he needs to excel in the discipline that he has chosen. For this he needs his coach. He needs to undergo rigorous training and preparation and needs a diet suitable to the demands of his body. A well-balanced diet is without a doubt, the fuel that his body needs to drive him towards the end goal of any athlete, which is excellence.

MILO is without a doubt, the right source of energy to jumpstart the road towards greatness. It has proven itself a constant companion of some of the country's sports icons, the likes of Lydia de Vega-Mercado and Christine Jacob-Sandejas, in their early beginnings and athletes who have carved their niche in their respective fields.

Swimming's Lisa Danila and tennis ace Johnny Arcilla are but some of the present batch of sports superstars who had their early start with MILO, together with budding taekwondo stars, Japoy Lizardo and Roshelle Lavalan.

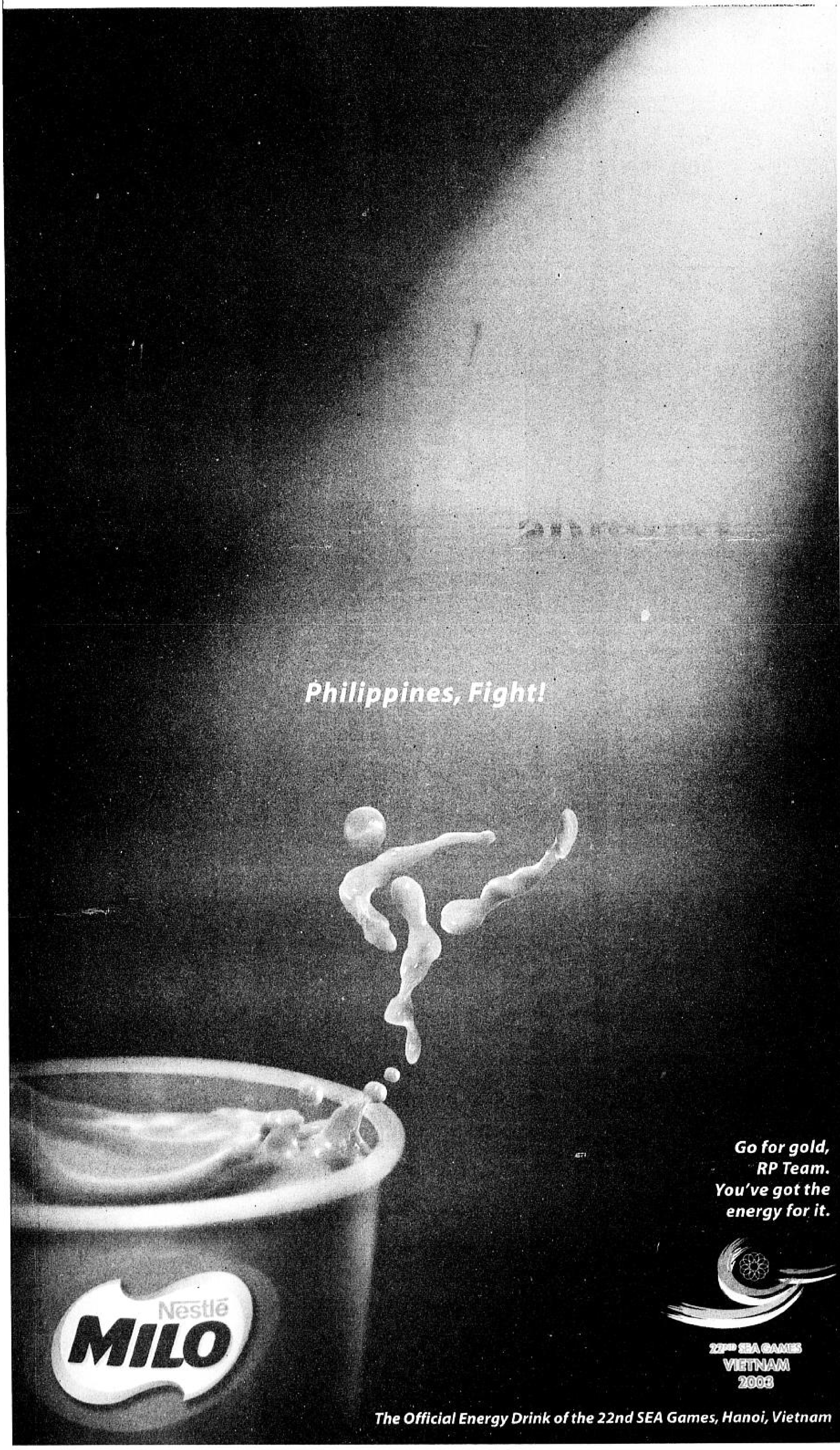
Perhaps, no other brand has been a steadfast supporter of local sports -- its grassroots and mass-based programs -- other than MILO.

It has been a partner of athletes in their training, with its mineral components providing them the right materials that their body needs.

After all, the best only needs the best for a partner.

MILO is one with the nation in sending off these six hundred fiftyeight athletes to the Vietnam SEA Games.

Go for Gold, Team Philippines! Mabuhay kayo!


Philippines, Fight!
Go for gold, RP Team. You've got the energy for it.
Nestlé
MILO
22ND SEA GAMES
VIETNAM
2003
The Official Energy Drink of the 22nd SEA Games, Hanoi, Vietnam

A CALL FOR UNITY AND SUPPORT FOR THE TEAM PHILIPPINES TO THE 22ND SEA GAMES

Once again, our Team Philippines will vie for the country's honor and pride in the 22nd Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in Vietnam next month.

Our athletes -- buoyed by the strong support given by Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the First Gentleman Foundation and the private sector -- are now ready to banner our national colors high.

Like what Manny Pacquiao, C.J. Suarez, and Dorothy Delasin's recent triumphant victories, the Filipino nation's spirit for excellence and persevering aspiration for brilliance in the international field will again be showcased and championed by our own Team Philippines.

Their victories proved that Filipino athletes have what it takes to be world-class. More than anything else, their victories have catapulted our nation to a new dawn of peace and unity.

For behind the struggle of our national athletes lies the similar struggle of the Filipino nation for worldwide honor, respect, and recognition.

Courage. Determination. Patriotism. These are indeed the characters that mold the spirit of the Filipino athletes, the characters that will define the momentum and success of the Team Philippines' campaign in the SEA Games.

Together with the whole nation, let us unite and display our flag to every home as we pray and cheer for the victory of our Filipino athletes.

Mabuhay ang Atletang Pilipino!

Maraming Salamat sa Tiwala!

Maraming Salamat sa Paniniwala!

ERIC R. BUHAIN
CHAIRMAN
PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION

LEON G. MONTEMAYOR
COMMISSIONER

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SM CITY NORTH EDSA
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2 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
3 CHAVIT SINGSON
4 MR. SUAVE
5 THE GRUDGE
6 COLD CREEK MANOR
7 MASTER & COMMANDER
8 LOONEY TUNES

SM CITY CEBU
2313076
1 MASTER & COMMANDER
2 IDENTITY
3 THE PHONE
4 CHAVIT SINGSON
5 THE WISHER
6 MAPANUKSO
7 MR. SUAVE
8 LOONEY TUNES

SM CITY BACOOR
4172868
1 MASTER & COMMANDER
2 COLD CREEK MANOR
3 SCARY MOVIE 3
4 CHAVIT SINGSON
5 LOONEY TUNES
6 MR. SUAVE
7 AKO, SIYA O IKAW
8 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015
1 MASTER & COMMANDER
2 LOONEY TUNES
3 THE WISHER
4 CHAVIT SINGSON
5 WRONG TURN
6 MR. SUAVE

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294075
1 SCARY MOVIE 3
2 LOONEY TUNES
3 CHAVIT SINGSON
4 MR. SUAVE

SM BICUTAN
7763055
1 LOONEY TUNES
2 MR. SUAVE
3 CHAVIT SINGSON
4 MASTER & COMMANDER

SM CITY MARILAO
1 LOONEY TUNES
2 MR. SUAVE
3 CHAVIT SINGSON
4 SCARY MOVIE 3

SM STA. MESA
7149522 • 7161416
1 MR. SUAVE
2 COLD CREEK MANOR
3 MASTER & COMMANDER
4 AKO, SIYA O IKAW
5 LOONEY TUNES
6 SEX SCANDAL
7 SCARY MOVIE 3
8 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
9 CHAVIT SINGSON
10 WRONG TURN

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888
1 CHAVIT SINGSON
2 SCARY MOVIE 3
3 LOONEY TUNES
4 THE GRUDGE
5 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
6 COLD CREEK MANOR
7 MR. SUAVE
8 MASTER & COMMANDER
9 CHAVIT SINGSON
10 AKO, SIYA O IKAW

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9390749
1 ZHOU YU'S TRAIN
2 MR. SUAVE
3 MASTER & COMMANDER
4 COLD CREEK MANOR
5 LOONEY TUNES
6 CHAVIT SINGSON
7 THE WISHER
8 MR. SUAVE
9 SCARY MOVIE 3
10 SEX SCANDAL
11 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
12 AKO, SIYA O IKAW

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998
1 LOONEY TUNES
2 LIBERATED
3 MR. SUAVE
4 CHAVIT SINGSON
5 THE SUSPECT
6 MASTER & COMMANDER

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7108977-80
1 INNER SENSES
2 UPTOWN GIRLS
3 MR. SUAVE
4 MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER

SM MEGAMALL
6331001 • 6339406
1 MASTER & COMMANDER
RESERVE-A-SEAT dial 6368000
2 MASTER & COMMANDER
3 SCARY MOVIE 3
4 LOONEY TUNES
5 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
6 COLD CREEK MANOR
7 WRONG TURN
8 CHAVIT SINGSON
9 MR. SUAVE
10 THE GRUDGE
11 CHAVIT SINGSON
12 ZHOU YU'S TRAIN

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302
1 LOONEY TUNES
2 CHAVIT SINGSON
3 MR. SUAVE
4 AKO, SIYA O IKAW

SM CITY ILOILO
3209432
1 BELPHEGOR
2 RESERVED
3 MR. SUAVE
4 LIBERATED
5 LOONEY TUNES
6 MASTER & COMMANDER
7 RESERVED
8 IDENTITY

SM CITY MANILA
5239240
1 LOONEY TUNES
2 SCARY MOVIE 3
3 THE GRUDGE
4 THE GRUDGE
5 COLD CREEK MANOR
6 MASTER & COMMANDER
7 AKO, SIYA O IKAW
8 WRONG TURN
9 MR. SUAVE
10 ZHOU YU'S TRAIN
11 THE WISHER
12 CHAVIT SINGSON

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8593804
1 IDENTITY
2 MR. SUAVE
3 UNDERWORLD
4 DARK BLUE

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464505
1 MASTER & COMMANDER
2 MR. SUAVE
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

THE PODIUM CINEMA

18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City • 638 9781 - 85

1 COLD CREEK MANOR
12:10 FS/12:40 MF/3:15/5:50/8:25/8:45/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:05END

2 LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION
12:05 FS/12:35 MF/2:40/4:45/6:50/8:55/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:30 END

For Seat Reservation, call 633 6975 • LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS
Matinee - P100.00 - Screening until 5pm • Monday thru Friday • Regular: P120.00 - After 5pm • Saturday • Sunday • Holidays (Reserved Seating)

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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Annual National
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Galleria

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687-0593

THX /All Digital

1 MASTER AND COMMANDER 12:35, 3:35, 6:35, 9:35, THX
4 COLD CREEK MANOR 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
2 SCARY MOVIE 3 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
5 LOONEY TUNES 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
3 MASTER AND COMMANDER 10:10, 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:00
6 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS 10:50, 1:35, 5:20, 7:05, 9:50
7 AKO IKAW SIYA 11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
9 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY 12:20, 4:40, 9:00, 12:50
8 MR. SUAVE 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
10 THE GRUDGE 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00

MATINEE PRICE: P100 THX cinema / P75 1level cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita

526-7185
536-7809 to 12

1 SCARY MOVIE 3 - 10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:30, 10:00
2 MASTER AND COMMANDER - 10:55, 1:45, 4:35, 7:25, 10:00
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 THE GRUDGE - 11:05, 12:55, 2:45, 4:35, 6:25, 8:15, 10:00
5 MR. SUAVE - 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50
6 LOONEY TUNES - 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50
7 COLD CREEK MANOR - 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50

Metro East

Marcos hway
682-8193/99
682-8280

1 SCARY MOVIE 3
2 LOONEY TUNES
3 LOONEY TUNES
4 COLD CREEK MANOR
5 MASTER AND COMMANDER
6 THE CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
7 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
8 MR. SUAVE

Novaliches

935-3229 / 31

1 MASTER AND COMMANDER
2 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
3 COLD CREEK MANOR
4 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
5 MR. SUAVE
6 SCARY MOVIE 3
7. ZHOU YU'S TRAIN
8 MASTER AND COMMANDER

Malabon Concepcion 288-0985/2575	Cainta Ortigas Extension 240-4601
CHAVIT SINGSON STORY 1	RESERVED
LOONEY TUNES 2	LOONEY TUNES
MR. SUAVE 3	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
MASTER AND COMMANDER 4	RESERVED

Sta. Rosa Laguna (049)837-0907	Lipa, Batangas Old National Highway Malasnay Lipa (043)757-3664/312-5870
LOONEY TUNES 1	THE SPY
CHAVIT SINGSON STORY 2	LOONEY TUNES
WRONG TURN 3	SEX SCANDAL
MR. SUAVE 4	MR. SUAVE
MASTER AND COMMANDER 5	MASTER AND COMMANDER

Star Mills San Fernando Pampanga (045)875-1927 (045)961-5270	Imus (046)471-8188 / 875-5858
WRONG TURN 1	MASTER AND COMMANDER
CHAVIT SINGSON STORY 2	LOONEY TUNES
MR. SUAVE 3	MR. SUAVE
THE SPY 4	COLD CREEK MANOR
LOONEY TUNES 5	SCARY MOVIE 3
MASTER AND COMMANDER 6	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY

Bacolod (034)441-0458/59	Iloilo (033)336-8070 to 78
LOONEY TUNES 1	LOONEY TUNES
UNDERWORLD 2	MASTER AND COMMANDER
MR. SUAVE 3	IDENTITY
MASTER AND COMMANDER 4	MR. SUAVE
IDENTITY 5	BELPHEGOR
SUCKERS 6	LIBERATED

NOW SHOWING
at Robinsons Movieworld Cinemas

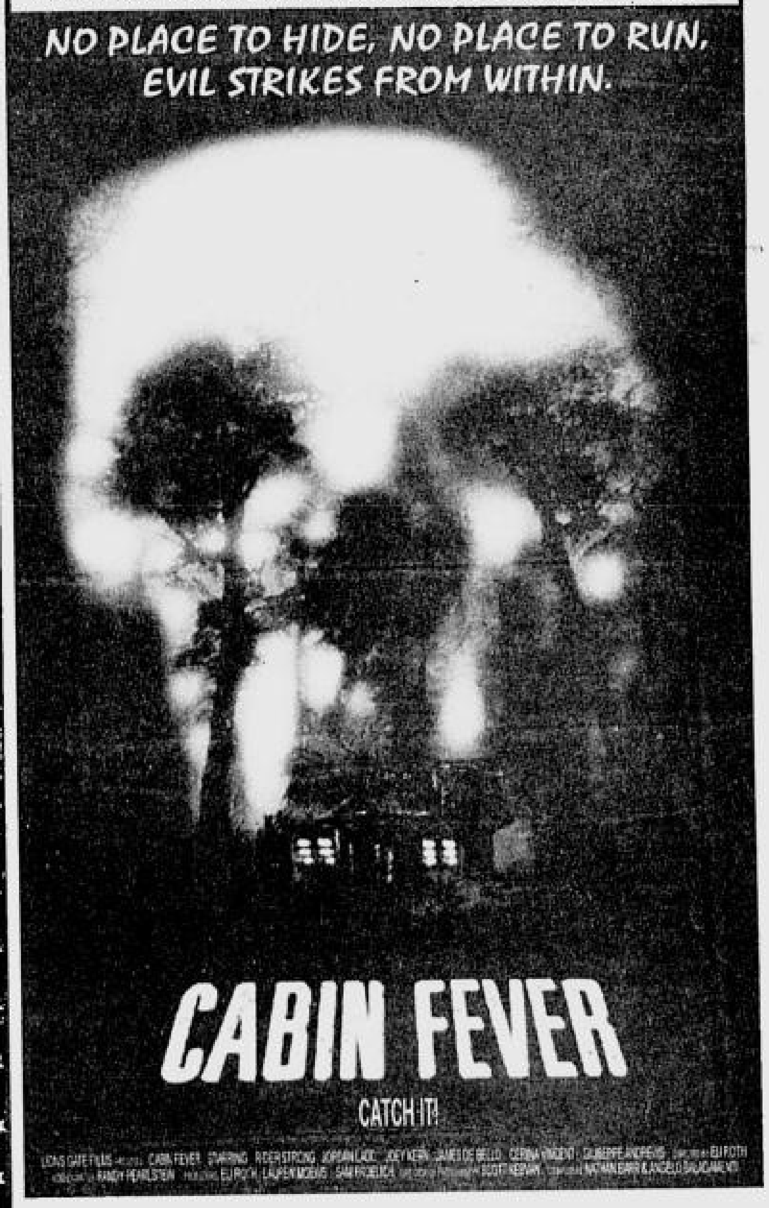
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

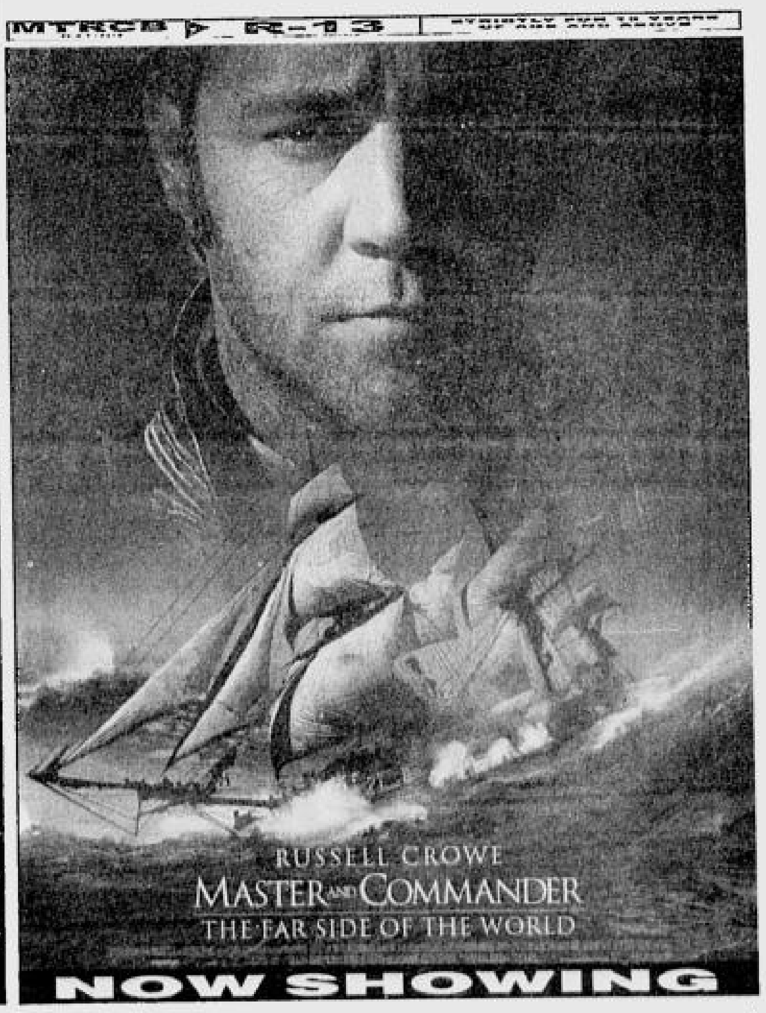
MTRCB RATING ➤ PG 13 | Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

DENZEL WASHINGTON
HOW DO YOU SOLVE A MURDER WHEN ALL THE EVIDENCE POINTS TO YOU.
OUT OF TIME
OPENS DECEMBER 3

OPENS DECEMBER 10

WARNING... IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU. As hot as today's headlines!
First the high fever, followed by shortness of breath, then dry cough, headache and muscular stiffness. Then a slow painful death awaits the victim as the demonic virus slowly devours your body tissues.


NO PLACE TO HIDE, NO PLACE TO RUN,
EVIL STRIKES FROM WITHIN.
CABIN FEVER
CATCH IT!



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Darryl Shy on RX 93

DARRYL Shy offers a fresh sound in local music with the single "This Christmas, I'll Be There," from his BMG album "Christmas Prayers." Darryl will be heard performing live over RX 93.1's concert series at 6 tonight. He will perform at the '70s Bistro in Quezon City on Dec. 2, Gwellos Bar in Legaspi Village, Makati on Dec. 5, Bistro 110 also in Legaspi Village on Dec. 17. For inquiries, call 0917-8425203.

SHOW TIME

Christmas Spageti

THE SEXBOMB hit "Spageti" is now a merry Christmas ditty. The holiday version of the song is featured in Alpha Music's "Apir Tayo, Masaya ang Pasko" album. The album is a compilation of the Sexbomb's hits and timeless Christmas carols like "Mano Po Ninong, Mano Po Ninang," "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus," "Jingle Bell Rock," "Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer," "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." The novelty lies in the unusual combination of current OPM hits back to back with all-time Christmas favorites.

Retro at Music Museum

THE RETRO fever will rage at the Music Museum on Dec. 5 with back-to-back performances by '60s and '70s hit makers Hotdog, Boyfriends, RJ and Friends led by Ramon Jacinto, and the Hitmakers in "Hitback." Hosting the show are the different personalities of Willie Nepomuceno.

"Hitback" is staged by Steve O'Neill Soundtrack Productions. A free cruise for two aboard a Star Cruises luxury vessel will be raffled off at the end of the show. Tickets are available at the Music Museum and Ticketworld.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	MR. SUAVE
Ali 2	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
Ali 3	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
Ali 4	LOONEY TUNES
Ali 5	MASTER AND COMMANDER
Ali 6	SCARY MOVIE 3
Ali 7	AKO, IKAW, O SIYA

ARANETA COLISEUM

DEC 3	PBA FINALS 2: COKE VS. SMB
DEC 5	PBA FINALS 3: SMB VS. COKE
DEC 7	PBA FINALS 4: COKE VS. SMB
DEC 8	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
DEC 10	NCA 7-COCK DERBY

Opens Dec. 23 DISNEY ON ICE "Beauty & The Beast"

BUY YOUR TICKETS EARLY TO GET THE BEST SEATS!

Call TicketNet at 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	AKO, IKAW O SIYA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BFRTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	CHAVIT SINGSON
B	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MY FIRST ROMANCE
CINEMA-2	AKO, IKAW O SIYA
CINEMA-3	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LOONEY TUNES
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MR SUAVE
CINEMA-6	WRONG TURN
CINEMA-7	SEX SCANDAL
CINEMA-8	CHAVIT
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	MASTER AND COMMANDER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LOONEY TUNES
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	COLD CREEK MANOR
CINEMA-12	MATRIX REVOLUTION
CINEMA-14	CHAVIT
CINEMA-15	MR SUAVE

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	MR SUAVE
CINEMA-1	UNDERWORLD
CINEMA-2	MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER
CINEMA-4	AMERICAN PSYCHO

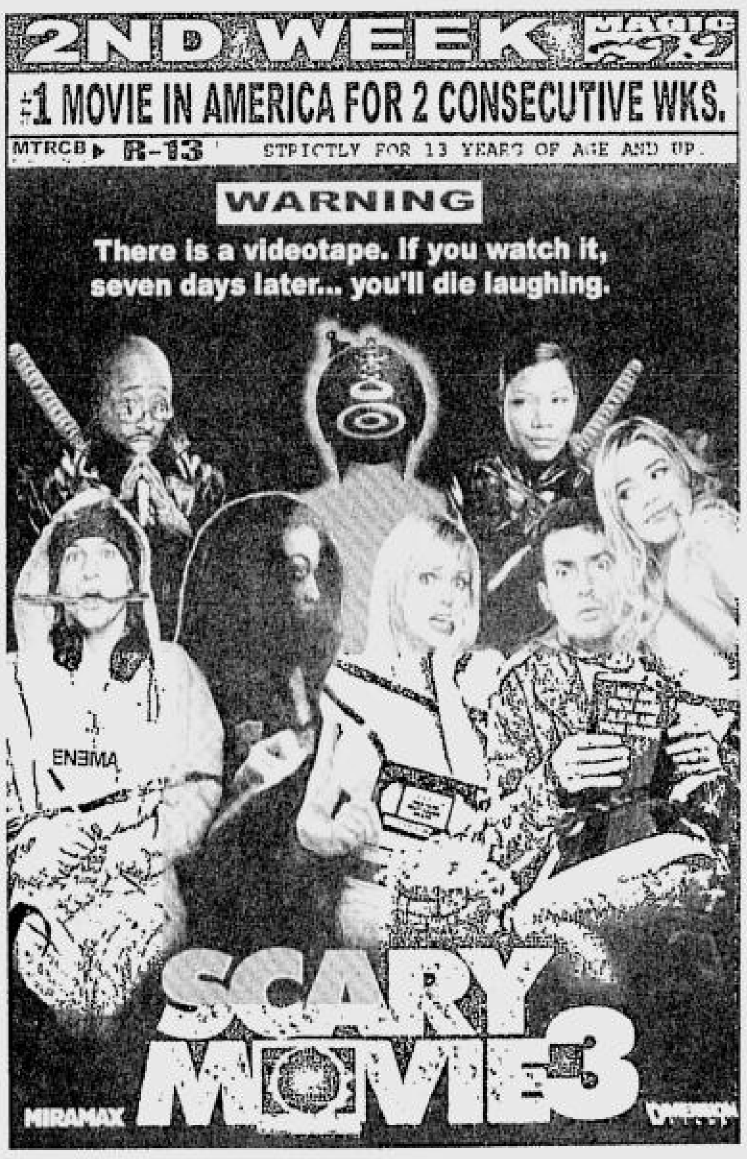
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

OPENS DECEMBER 10

#1 MOVIE IN AMERICA

MAGIC 89.9
A GIANT WITH A HEART OF GOLD AND A BAGFUL OF PURE MAGIC
elf



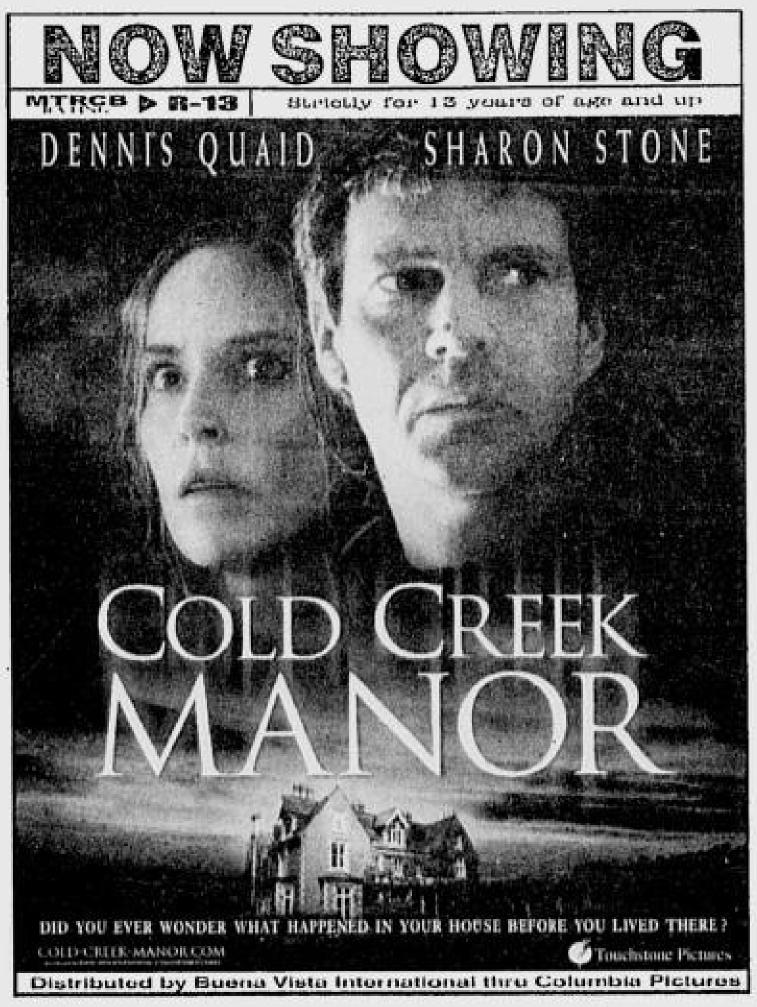
2ND WEEK

#1 MOVIE IN AMERICA FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE WKS.

MTRCB ▸ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP.

WARNING

There is a videotape. If you watch it, seven days later... you'll die laughing.



NOW SHOWING

MTRCB ▸ R-13 Strictly for 13 years of age and up

DENNIS QUAID SHARON STONE

COLD CREEK MANOR

DID YOU EVER WONDER WHAT HAPPENED IN YOUR HOUSE BEFORE YOU LIVED THERE?

COLD-CREEK-MANOR.COM

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

ALL DIGITAL SOUND AYALA CINEMAS PRESENTS

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 LOONEY TUNES	1 LOONEY TUNES	ArtFilm 1 ASH WEDNESDAY 12 40 2 45 4 50 6 55 9 00	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 SCARY MOVIE 3 1 30 3 30 5 30 7 30 9 30 11 30	THX 1 LOONEY TUNES
2 CHAVIT	2 SCARY MOVIE 3	2 THE GRUDGE 12 25 2 35 4 45 6 55 9 00	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 LOONEY TUNES 1 00 3 00 5 00 7 00 9 00 11 00	2 SCARY MOVIE 3
3 THE GRUDGE	GUARANTEED SEATS THX MASTER & COMMANDER 1 30 4 30 7 30 10 30	Onstage REGINE VELASQUEZ Dec. 5 & 6, 12 & 13, 19 & 20, 9PM	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN 1 30 3 45 6 00 8 15 10 30	3 MASTER & COMMANDER
4 MR. SUAVE	4 WRONG TURN		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 COLD CREEK MANOR 1 30 4 00 6 30 9 00 11 30	4 LOONEY TUNES
	5 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 MASTER & COMMANDER [illegible]	5 COLD CREEK MANOR
	6 THE GRUDGE			
	7 COLD CREEK MANOR			

For sreening times, call 729-7777. Movies are subject to change without prior notice. Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 and send to 2333. Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

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(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DOLBY) TRAIN
2 (SDDS) COLD CREEK MANOR
3 (DTS) LOONEY TUNES
4 GOLD (DTS ES) MATRIX REVOLUTION
5 GOLD (DOLBY EX) LOONEY TUNES
6 GOLD (SDDS) MASTER & COMMANDER
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX) SCARY MOVIE-3
8 MR. SUAVE
9 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
10 GRUDGE-1

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 (DTS) RESERVE
4 RESERVE
5 RESERVE
6 (DTS) RESERVE
Golden Pearl THX RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA ① ② & ③
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 MR. CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2 LOONEY TUNES
3 AKO IKAW SIYA

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 MR. SUAVE
2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 SCARY MOVIE-3
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) LOONEY TUNES
5 AKO, IKAW, SIYA

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 AKO, IKAW, SIYA
2 SEX SCANDAL
3 MR. SUAVE
4 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
5 MASTER & COMMANDER
6 LOONEY TUNES

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2 SEX SCANDAL

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 893-4225, 892-2503
LOONEY TUNES

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MR. SUAVE
2 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC
tel 930.9515
1
2
3

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) TEL. 776-74-21
1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2 MR. SUAVE
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588
1 (SDDS) RESERVE
4 RESERVE
5 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
6 MR. SUAVE
7 (DTS) LOONEY TUNES
8 (SDDS) COLD CREEK MANOR
9 (DOLBY) TRAIN

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508
2 RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364-3781
1 AKO, IKAW, SIYA
2 MR. SUAVE
3 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 (SDDS) LOONEY TUNES
5 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
6 (DOLBY) MASTER & COMMANDER
7 (DTS) SCARY MOVIE-3
8 TRAIN
9 SEX SCANDAL

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082
1 AKO. IKAW. SIYA
2 (SDDS) MASTER & COMMANDER
3 (DTS) CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 (DOLBY) LOONEY TUNES
5 MR. SUAVE

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2 MR. SUAVE
3 (DTS) MASTER & COMMANDER
4 AKO. IKAW. SIYA
5 (SDDS) LOONEY TUNES

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Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888
1 RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson AKO. IKAW. SIYA
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Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 MR. SUAVE
2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 AKO. IKAW. SIYA
4 LOONEY TUNES

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2 MASTER & COMMANDER
3 LOONEY TUNES
4 MR. SUAVE
5 AKO IKAW. SIYA

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 AKO. IKAW. SIYA
2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY

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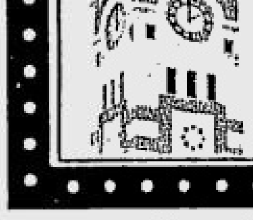

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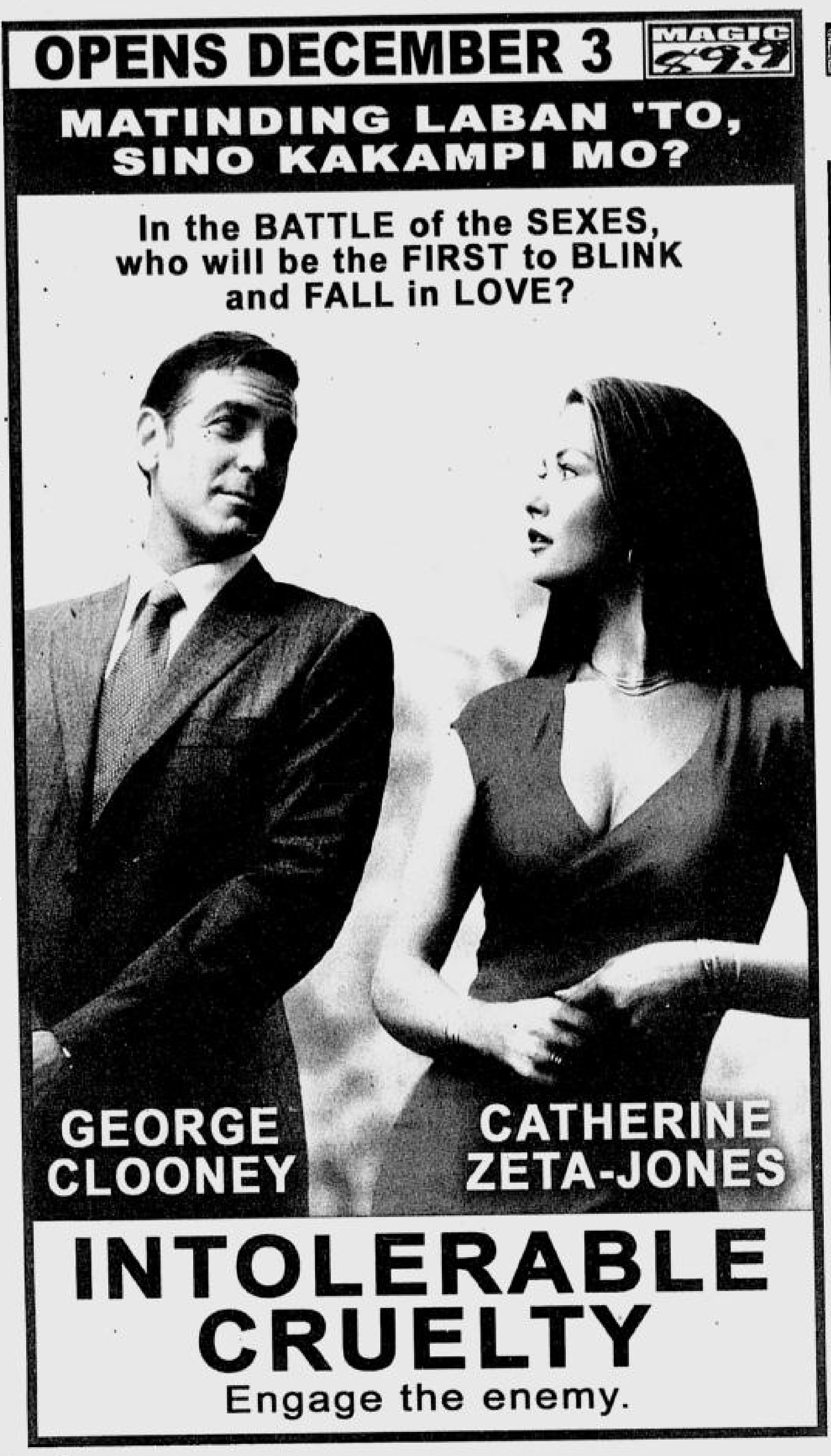
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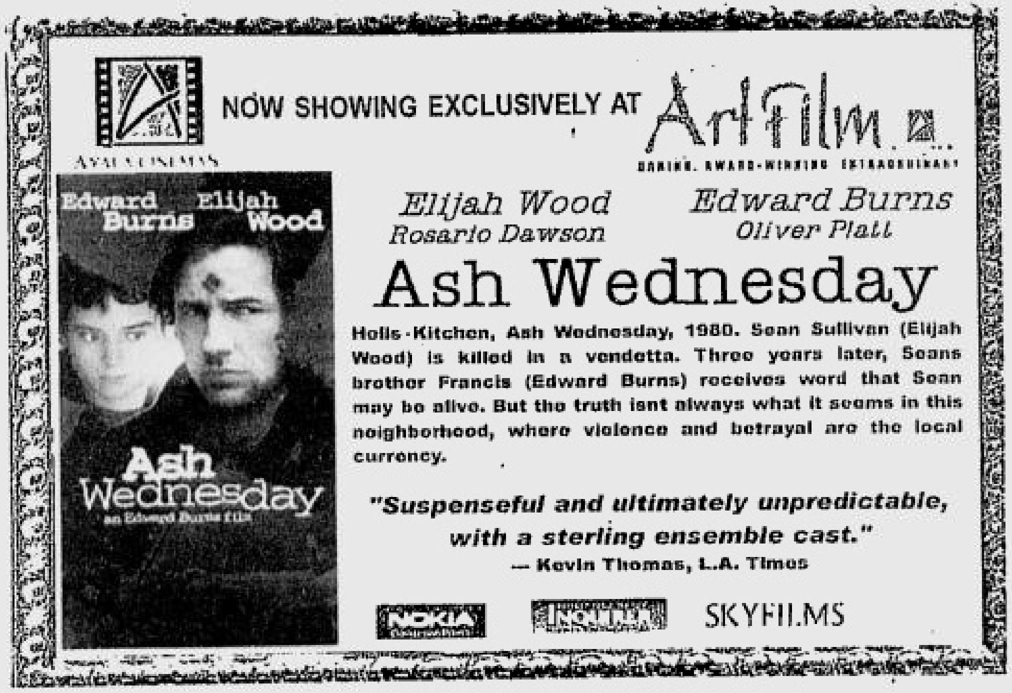
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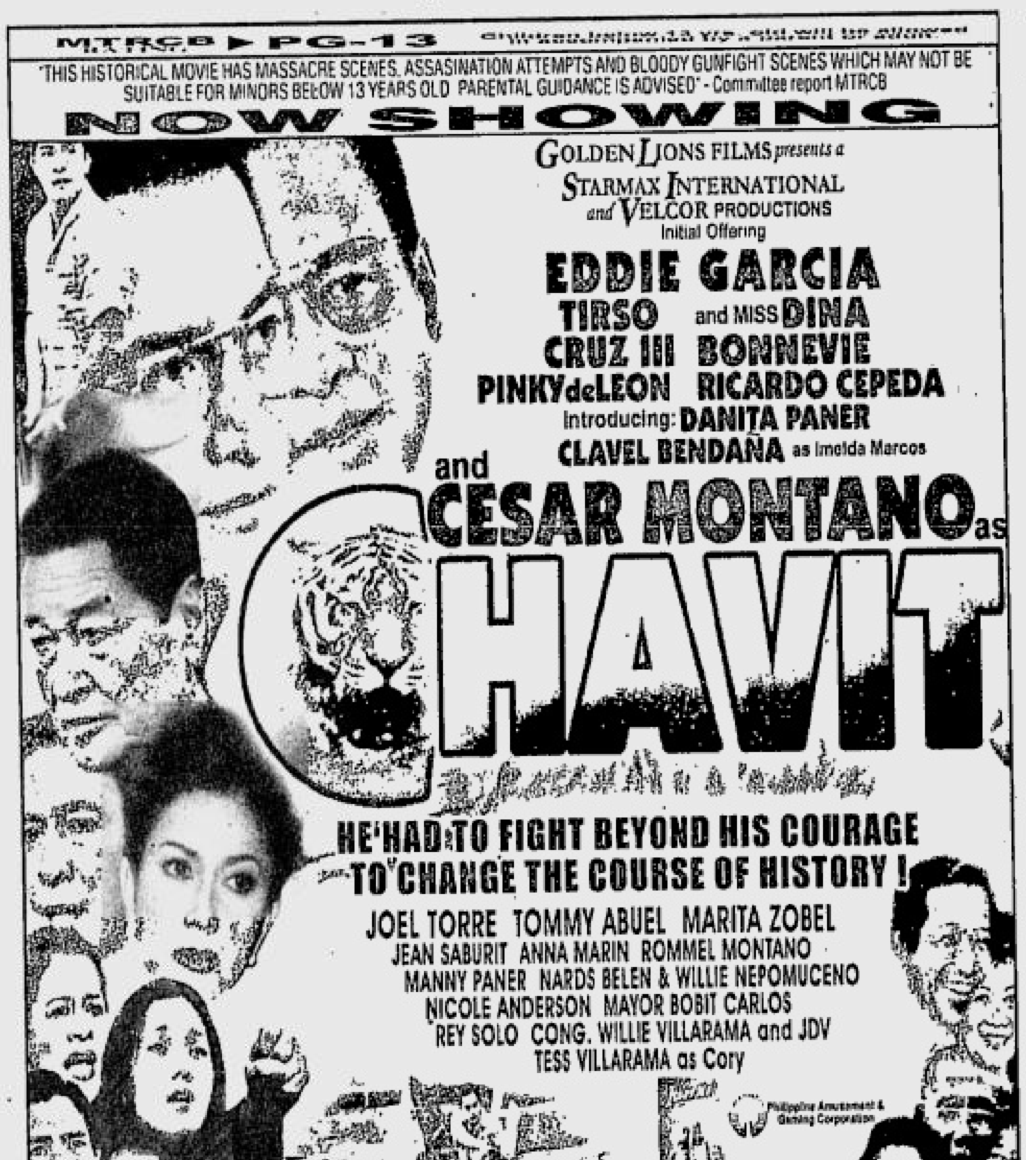
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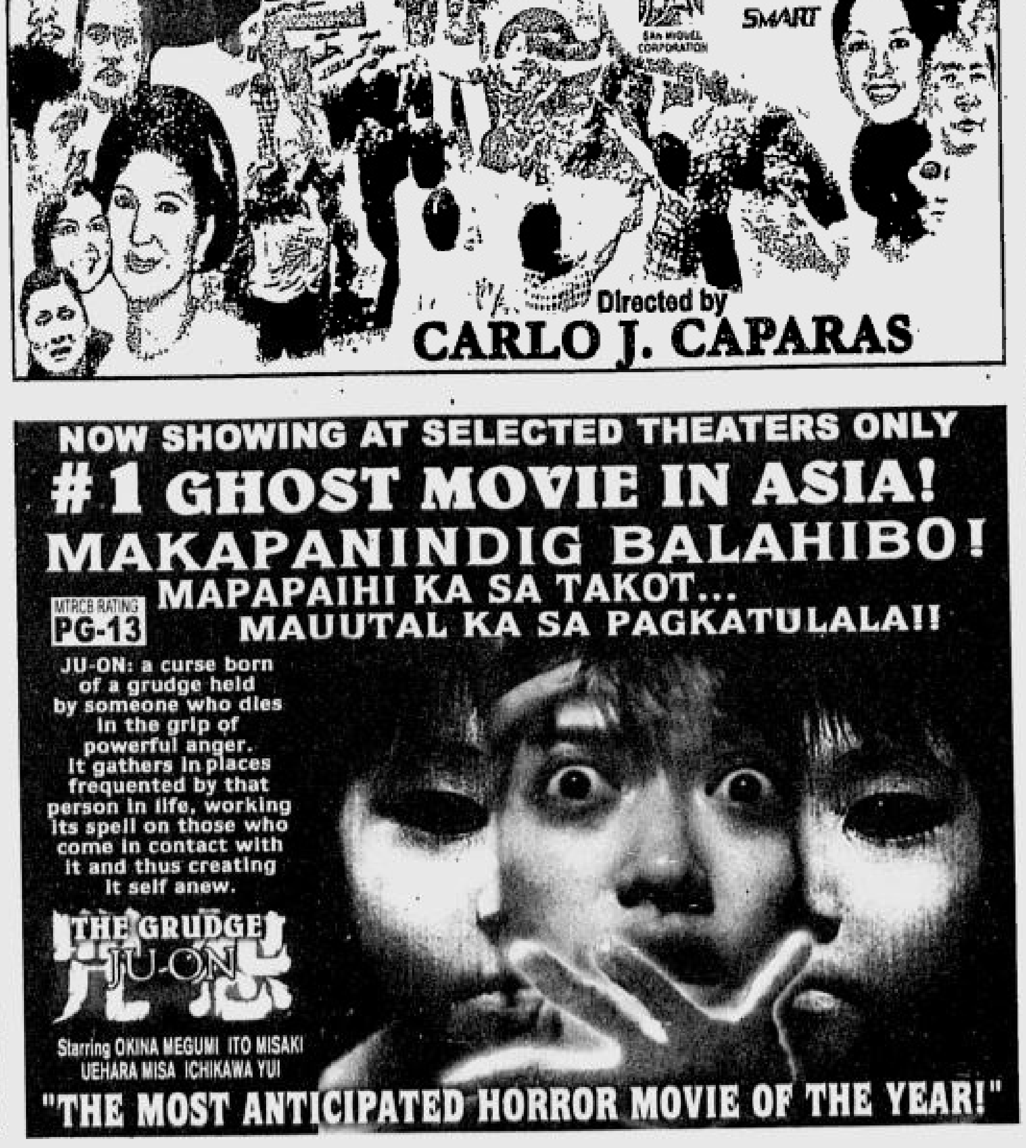
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"THE MOST ANTICIPATED HORROR MOVIE OF THE YEAR!"

'FPJ . . .

From page C1

"*Ninong ko si FPJ sa kasal. Si Presidente* Gloria, *ninang ko rin sa kasal* (Both FPJ and the President stood as my wedding sponsors)," the actor explained.

But loyalty to the party prevails, according to Bong, who's the third actor to play Mars Ravelo's *komiks* hero "Captain Barbel."

"I am with Lakas. *Alangan namang lumipat ako ng partido* (It's farfetched for me to leave Lakas and join an opposition party)," said Bong.

"Anyway, it's the people who would decide (who to vote for president). *Wala naman siyang* (FPJ) *nagawang masama sa akin.* (He has never done anything to harm me.) I admire him a lot."

Earlier, Bong told INQUIRER Entertainment that "FPJ, like anybody else, has the right to run for president. Like anybody else, he has the ability to run the country."

Still confused

Regarding his own candidacy for senator in 2004, Bong, who lost his re-election bid as Cavite governor in the last elections, still refused to confirm speculations that he would fight again in the political arena.

"We'll get there when I'm ready to tell you," said the actor, who heads the Video Regulatory Board.

"I still have a lot of things to do in the VRB."

But sources close to the actor confirmed that Bong would be running for senator.

The deadline for filing of candidacy is on Jan. 15.

"I haven't announced anything yet. *Puro* speculations *lang* (Everything is all speculations)," Bong stressed.

But he revealed that in the most recent Pulse Asia Survey on the senatorial race, his name had turned up as number three, next only to Sen. Loren Legarda and former Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

Chance to win

"I have a chance to win," he said.

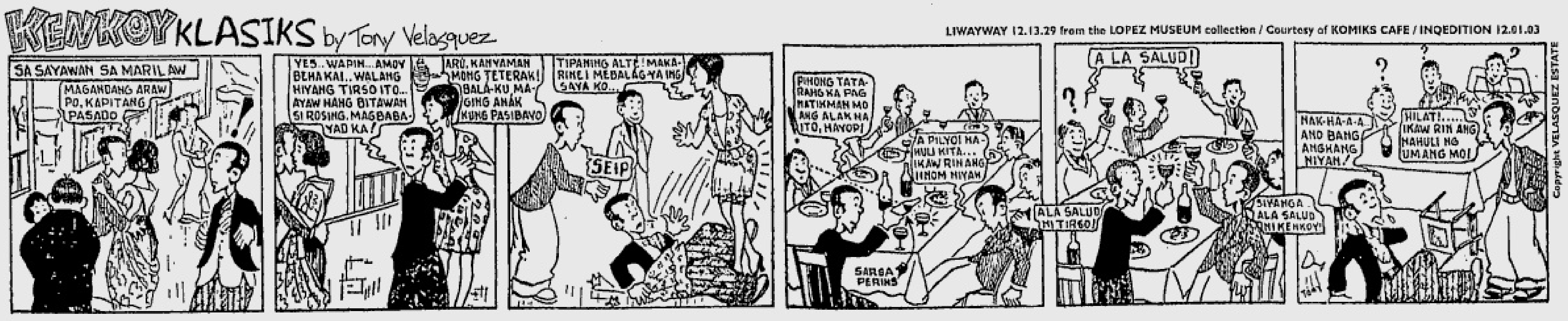
And after losing about 20 pounds to get into the tights of Captain Barbel, Bong is in fighting form for the campaign trail.

"*Wala na akong bilbil. Puro* abs *na yan* (I no longer have belly flab. This is all abs)," he said during the press conference. "But I still had a hard time with the harness because it held me tightly from my midsection, almost squeezing my insides. *Gusto kong sumuka pagkatapos ng* take (I wanted to vomit after each take)," Bong added.

In "Captain Barbel," Bong "flies" and fights the bad guys, played by Albert Martinez as Lagablab, Jeffrey Quizon as Dagampat and Ruffa Mae Quinto as Freezy. He also romances leading lady Regine Velasquez, who, in a dream sequence in the Mac Alejandre movie, plays Darna.

"Please watch the movie," Bong asked the members of the press.

The next time around, Bong might be saying, "Please vote for me."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TIPANING ALTE! MAKARINE I MEBALAG-YA ING SAYA KO...
SEIP
PINONG TATARANG KA PAG NATIKMAN MO ANG ALAK NA ITO, HAYOP!
A PILYO! NAHULI KITA... IKAW RIN ANG IIHOM NIYAH
SARSA PERINS
ALA SALUD NI TIRSO!
A LA SALUD!
SIYANGA ALA SALUD NI KENKOY!
NAK-HA-A-A ANO BANG ANGHANG NIYAH!
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E-heads bags NU Hall of Fame Rock Award

By Claire Agbayani
Contributor

"MABUHAY ang Eraserheads!"

E-heads (now Mongols) vocalist Ely Buendia blurted out this valedictory line as he received the Hall of Fame Award given the defunct band by NU during its 10th Rock Awards ceremonies last Wednesday at the World Trade Center on Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

But the three other E-heads—guitarist Marcus Adoro, bassist Buddy Zabala and drummer Raimund Marasigan—were conspicuously absent.

SHOW STOPPER

After E-heads disbanded about a year ago, Ely's "Mabuhay ... (long live)" has become an ironic tribute to the past.

E-heads might be one of the most important and influential groups of the '80s band scene, but by giving the group a Hall of Fame Award this year, NU could have bypassed more senior and deserving musicians.

Will there be no more NU Rock Awards next year?

This year's winners are: Sugarfree, Best New Artist; Barbie's Cradle and Angee Rozul, Producer of the Year (Barbie's Cradle); Pan, Best Album Packaging (Pan); 7 Ft. Jr., Best Music Video (for "Daisy"); Allan Bordeos of Kamikazee, Drummer of the Year; Rommel de la Cruz of Barbie's Cradle, Bassist of the Year; Ira Cruz of Kapatid, Guitarist of the Year; Kevin Roy of Razorback, Vocalist of the Year; Narda, In the Raw Award; Eraserheads, Hall of Fame; Kamikazee, Listeners' Choice; "Sa Wakas" by Sugarfree, Album of the Year; "Soul Searching" by Urban Dub, Song of the Year, Parokya ni Edgar, Artist of the Year.

The judges were musical arranger and former Rizal Underground bassist Angelo Villegas, MTV Philippines Marketing and Communication Director Rod Nepomuceno, sound engineer Albert Godinez, band manager Ann Angala-Shy, Papadom of Tropical Depression, Mayric's owner Eric So, and advertising producer Raul Blay.

Rock icon Joey "Pepe" Smith opened the show with his spirited version of "Lupang Hinirang."

Most of the people who attended the first NU Rock Awards were also present last Wednesday. But they were seated at the seemingly elitist, exclusive elevated platform for VIPS. These were people like Patrick Reidenbach of Club Dredd, who is now one of the top executives of the family-owned Pacific Office Machines, The Breed's Charlie Y. and Minco Fabregas who were in tuxedos, Karen Kunawicz, and ace photographer Eddie Boy Escudero among other Rock Awards denizens. Missing were Robbie Sunico and Mayric's Sazi Cosino? Also missed was the late Dodong Viray, former manager of Color It Red.

Former NU program director Myrene Academia and former NU publicity people Kat Tuason, Marcelline Santos and Claire Miranda were also nowhere to be found.

But also sighted at the VIP platform were film director Quark Henares, Indie filmmaker-turned-TV personality Tado with his on-screen partner Erning (Angel Rivero), VJ Shannen Torres with her S.O. Brando Umali, graphic designer Kara Tolentino with jazz musician Albert Albert, Philippines Yearbook president and publisher Gracie Go, Pulp Magazine associate editor Peach Abubakar with filmmaker and video director-husband Robert Quebral, VJ Dianne Sison, hot young telenovela actor John Lloyd Cruz, his screen father Ronnie Lazaro with fellow Ilonggo actor Joel Torre.

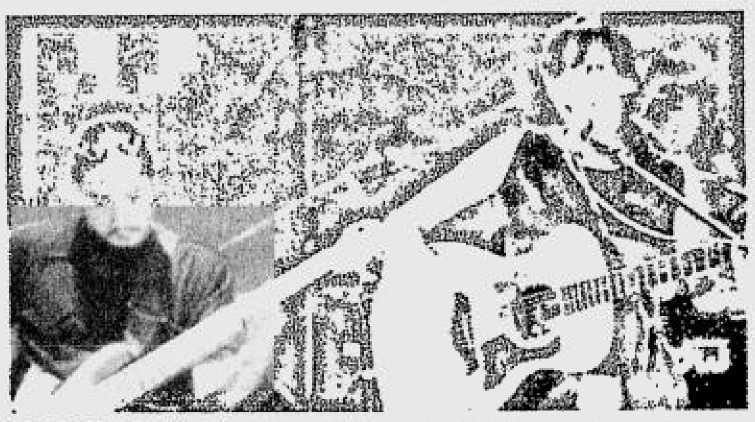
This year's Rock Awards also missed the 'coñotic' *(mestizo)* fans of Wolfgang, who used to occupy half the hall.

Among the performers that night were Bamboo, Chicosci ("Paris" and "Magasin"), Cynthia Alexander, Kamikazee ("Tsinelas"), Rivermaya ("Awit ng Kabataan"), Sugarfree ("Mariposa"), The Mongols, Urbandub ("Soul Searching") and The Dawn ("Salamat") and Parokya ni Edgar ("Yes, Yes Show") and Razorback ("Ang Huling El Bimbo").

As usual, NU head honcho Atom Henares was surrounded by a bevy of pretty young women, including presenters Andrea del Rosario, Michelle Bayle, Maui Taylor, Mylene Dizon, Victoria London and Katya Santos. The other presenters were Imago vocalist Aia de Leon, The Dawn vocalist Jett Pangan, UNTV's and Fatal Posporos' drummer Annette Ortiz, character actors Jaime Fabregas and Epi Quizon, NU Jocks Joey, Mondo, Zach and Francis Brew (a.k.a. Thelma Bowlen, Mon Castro, Rollie Lucero and Francis Reyes, respectively), Rico Manalo and Miggy, Roxy and newscaster Jaedee (a.k.a. Cathy Ilagan and former Bb. Pilipinas Joyce Ann Burton).

Prior to their performance, "In the Raw" Award nominees such as Bog, Narda, Plane Divides the Sky, and Subculture did introductory numbers.

PINOY rock 'n roll icon Joey "Pepe" Smith, NU newscaster Jaedee, and Victoria London



VOCALIST and bassist par-excellance Cynthia Alexander with bassist Louie Talan

ELY Buendia, receives the Hall of Fame award on behalf of the members of the defunct band Eraserheads

PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

FORMER NU jock and The Breed vocalist Charlie Y., actress Michelle Bayle, Guitarist of the Year Ira Cruz of Kapatid, actress Andrea del Rosario

Compelling viewing experience

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE caught the first two telecasts of Channel 2's new show, "24," last week, and were immediately caught up in its complex story of skullduggery in high places, for the highest places, for the highest stakes.

The suspense-thriller's title refers to the number of hours government agents led by **Keifer Sutherland**'s character have to prevent a major terrorist threat from being carried out.

The mission appears to be a very tall order because it soon turns out that most of the agents in the group have been compromised by their faceless foe. Still, Sutherland's character can't shirk his duty, despite the extreme danger involved.

It would be bearable if the danger involved only himself, but he eventually discovers that even members of his family are at risk. For instance, his daughter goes out on a double date that ends in tragedy when the other girl is disposed of by their dates, who turn out to be bent on holding Sutherland's daughter hostage.

The series is a compelling viewing experience because it eventually reveals that seemingly unrelated events are parts of a big and complex plot that will put many people's lives in grave danger.

There's also the chilling realization that this dire event is being prevented from taking place by only a few good and honest men.

The series is at the cutting edge of modern-day sleuthing with state-of-the-art technology and expert hackers who can help our hero break into heavy-security facilities, restricted bank records and other classified information he needs to put a face on his unseen and unknown foe.

Film debuts

THE MEMBERS of the F4 group are launching their respective film debuts in the coming weeks and months. The opening salvo is the action-romance vehicle, "Star Runner," which topbills **Vanness Wu**. It opens its local run on Dec. 3.

Next comes **Ken Zhu**'s romantic drama, "Sky of Love," in January. Soon after, **Jerry Yan** will star in the comedy, "Magic Kitchen," and **Vic Zhou** headlines the action comedy "Judo."

In "Star Runner," Vanness is paired with Korea's popular telenovela star, **Kim Hyun Joo** (of "Glass Slipper"). The film is about the passionate romance between a teacher (Hyun Joo) and a student (Vanness).

'Sine'skwela'

ABS-CBN Foundation's "Sine'skwela," a Science show for children, won the Prix de Jeunesse, or Youth Prize, at the 20th International Television Science Programme Festival in Orsay, France, last Oct. 18.

The grand prize was given for the show's episodes on conservation efforts for the Pasig River, written by **Gladys Mallillin** and directed by **Jon Red**. Philippine consul to France **Josefina Ingles-Estrada** received the award for "Sine'skwela."

Episode 1 focused on how the once pristine river has deteriorated over the years due to pollution and neglect. In Episode 2, children learn to value the benefits of having a biologically active river, and come up with practical ideas for helping the Pasig return to its former pristine state.

'Master and Commander'

THE CATHOLIC Bishop's Conference of the Philippines Cinema (Catholic Initiative for Enlightened Movie Appreciation) review group has found the film "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" acceptable on point of moral assessment, and average on point of technical assessment. Cinema rating: For viewers 14 and above.

Evaluation: ". . . In this age of heavily computerized action sequences and fantastic special effects, this down-to-earth, well-crafted movie is a welcome change. This sea adventure may seem old-fashioned, but it exudes as much vitality and exuberance as any digitally enhanced movie.

"The viewer enjoys not only the exciting battles at sea, but also the stimulating duel of minds of two diametrically opposed personalities superbly brought to life by **Russell Crowe** as the man of action, Captain Aubrey, and **Paul Bettany** as Dr. Maturin, the captain's philosophical and reflective devil's advocate.

"The beautiful cinematography, close attention to detail, well-written script and good direction (**Peter Weir**) all deserve mention. Courage, devotion to duty and loyalty to country are clearly depicted in this movie.

"This is the story of men who find themselves in the most trying circumstances, but who risk life and limb to achieve a worthy goal. Captain Aubrey best exemplifies these qualities—he has faith in the resources of the mind, and continues to hope and to affirm life. Leaders may learn something from him.

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MASTER AND COMMANDER PG13 11:25, 2:00, 4:35, 7:10, 9:50	LOONEY TUNES GP 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00	LOONEY TUNES GP 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:40

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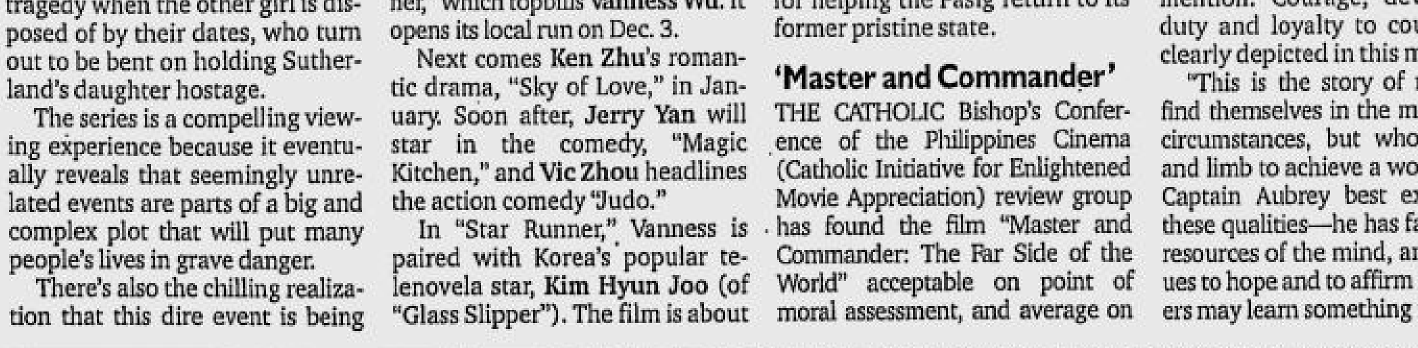

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CHRISTMAS TIME ALL OVER THE WORLD *Sammy Davis, Jr.* THE FIRST NOEL *Frank Sinatra*
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THE CHRISTMAS SONG *Sammy Davis, Jr.* HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING *Frank Sinatra*
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WINTER WONDERLAND *Dean Martin* I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS (IF ONLY IN MY DREAMS) *Frank Sinatra*
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ANO ANG NAGPAPA-SEXY KAY JUDAY?

TUESDAY

Hi! C Juday to. Grabe, kaka-xrcise k lng. Lam nyo, madali talgang makapayat ang kickboxing. Try nyo! 3x a wik ngki-kickboxing ako kung kya ng sked. Srap ng feeling! :)

THURSDAY

Kmusta po? D2 ako ngyn s taping. Kya lng sick nvestgativ prtner k. Ine-ncourage k ngang mg-vegetarian pra lmakas uli resistnsya nya gaya ko. Iba talga nggawa ng ryt fud, esp ng vgtable juice. :) Kip in touch!

SATURDAY

Helo, kamusta na? Nagsalad ako kanina. Sarap with tuna. Sarap din ng all-time favorite ko na gulay - asparagus n broccoli. Ayan, gusto ko naman kumain ulit. Hehehe :)

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Why not a 'tiangge' of art works?

CCP to hold special auction on Dec. 3

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

ATTENTION, art lovers, art collectors, or mere art buyers with an eye toward investment: Do you still need an Hernando R. Ocampo, an Arturo Luz, a José Joya or a Napoleon Abueva? A Bencab perhaps, or a multiple original by top printmakers Fil de la Cruz and Imelda Cajipe Endaya?

The works of these and other prominent artists, representing two generations, are up for grabs at a special auction being undertaken by the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The silent-bidding component of the auction was held Nov. 19-26. The works to be auctioned, including Cordillera pieces not part of the CCP collection, were previewed at the hallways (Pasilyo Vicente Manansala) and Little Theater lobby wall (Pasilyo Carlos V. Francisco). These were the first set of works.

The buyers wrote down their bids, which were tabulated at the end of the exhibit.

Things will come to a head with a live auction at the CCP Main Lobby on Dec. 3, 5:30 p.m. The auctioneers are Boy Abunda and Ces Drilon.

"During the live auction, the highest silent bid becomes the floor price," said Sid Gomez Hildawa, director of CCP's Cultural Resource Department and Visual Arts & Museo Division, in an interview. "And if no one bids higher, the highest silent bidder wins."

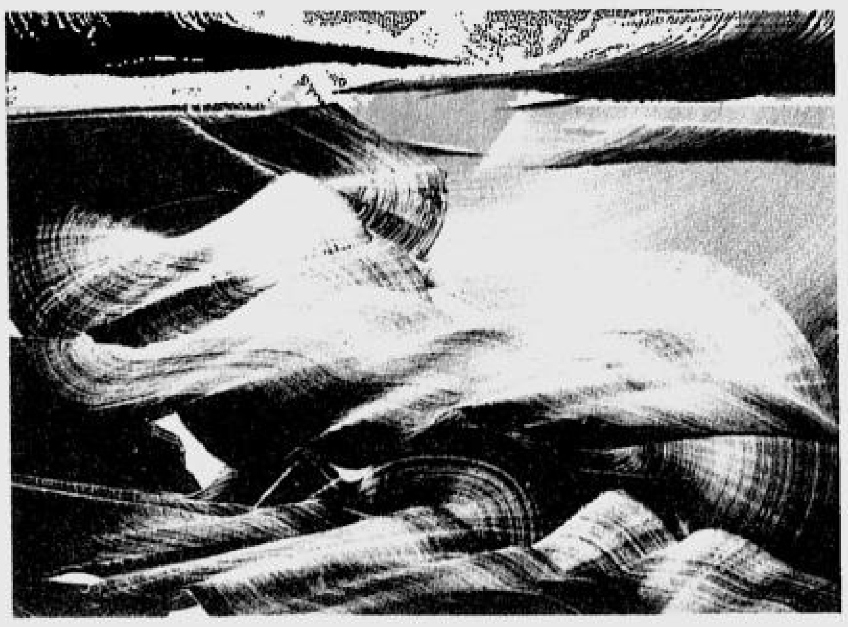
The second set of artworks will also be auctioned. Selected works may be viewed online (www.culturalcenter.gov.ph).

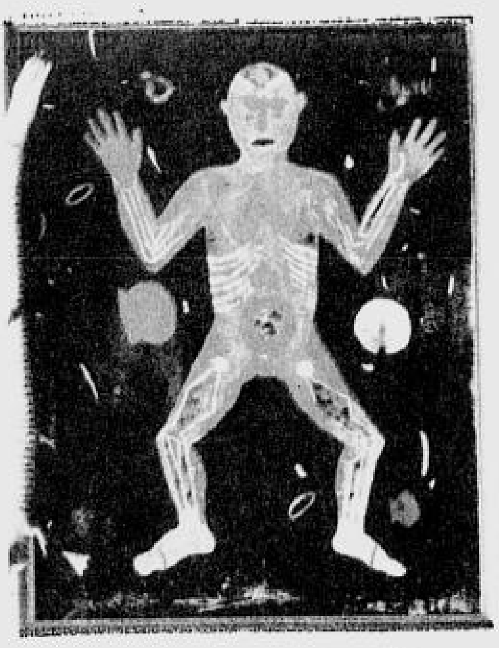
Other artists

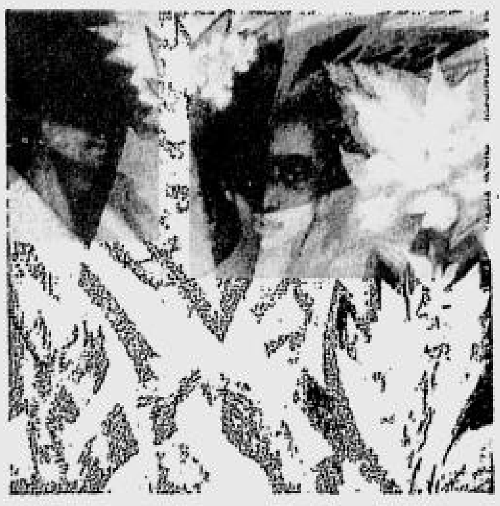
In addition to the four National Artists and the other artists mentioned, the works of the following will be on the auction block:

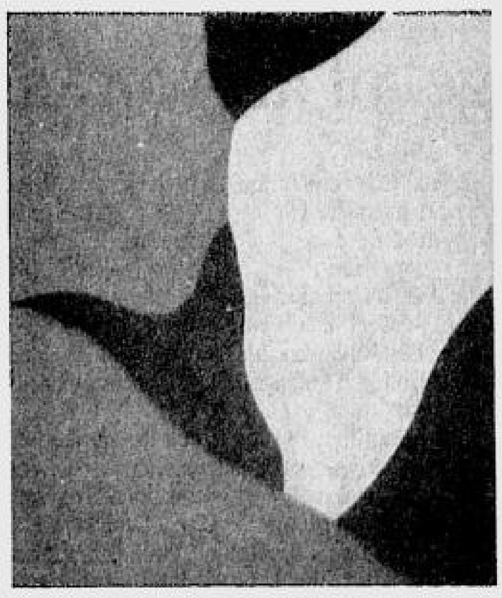
Augusto Albor, Ral Arrogante, Virgilio Aviado, Manuel Baldemor, Elmer Borlongan, Charito Bitanga, Norberto Carating, Alan Cosio, Ivi

WHY/D2


"SEARCH Mindscape," by Justin Nuyda


"SIDAPA'S Yardstick," by Roberto Feleo


"LIGAWANG Tagalog," by Fil de la Cruz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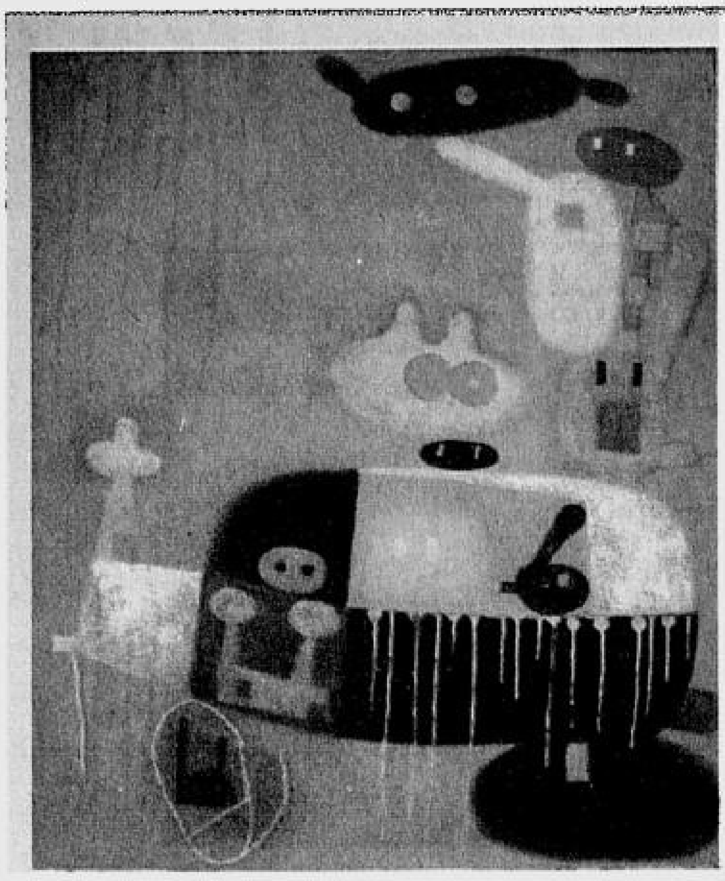


"JOYRIDE"

Abstract on a whim

By Ma. Jessica Jalandoni-Robillos
Contributor

CHRISTIAN Tamondong opened recently a 17-piece exhibit, "Whimsy's Park," which brings out not just the art enthusiast in viewers but the inner child in everyone as well.

With the use of acrylic and crayon, Tamondong waxes nostalgic with flair. He has chosen not only to use abstraction, but also colors that truly enforce his show's title.

Tamondong, 27, studied painting at the Philippine Women's University. He is a member of Anting-Anting, a group of artists based in Cavite. He has won prizes in the Art Association of the Philippines and the PLDT contests. His first solo exhibit was presented by The Drawing Room last February.

Fuchsia, lavender, aqua and almost-neon greens are utilized by Tamondong with aplomb. Carefree youth is what most of the pieces exude, some looking like they can find a place in the nursery.

Quite surprising, especially as abstract pieces are generally expected to be enigmatic, even dark. Save for the black that is used sparingly as shapes that either enhance or downplay, the viewers are treated to bursts of color.

"Pounding Heart" shows a girl's anticipation as she is about to receive a flower from a suitor, the light-blue background implying that she is enveloped by her own attraction to the other. Some elements are almost recognizable. A long column graduated by pink and yellow looks like a leg in a colorful striped stocking. Feet shod in black are askew, a charming portrayal of fidgeting.

The heart in bright yellow shows "lightheartedness" despite its supposed quickened pulsation, furthered by the ring of the same color that encircles it. Amusingly, a cartoon character does a cameo. A rabbit very much like Miffy is shown in a blue version.

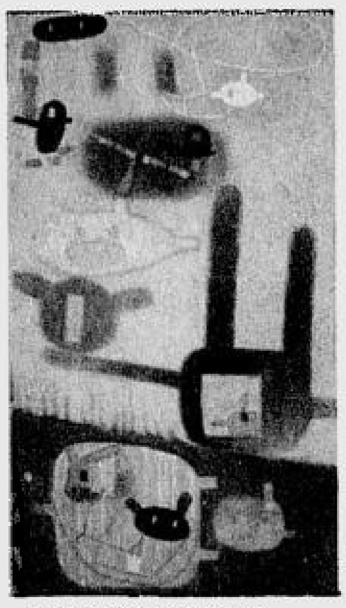
The tandem to the lass is "Flower," where her ardent admirer is poised to hand her one. It is but a single bloom, its stem and leaves with stripes of green shades, white and black.

The boy wears what is perhaps a striped shirt, with a head that suspiciously looks like another animation parody—a cubist Blue (the dog in the popular children's program, "Blue's Clues"). Maybe to say that he has been doggedly pursuing, or actually experiencing, albeit cliché, puppy love?

Maternal memory

For the artist, the pink background not only represents fixation to an object feminine or the object of his affection. It is partly an homage to his mother who passed away when Tamondong was only three years old. Pink was her favorite color, and through the work, Christian immortalizes her memory.

Apart from a penchant for stripes, the artist seems predisposed to animals. In "Picnic," the gathering seems an afternoon soirée of a variety of species in a park, minty green in rendition, bringing to mind the crisp smell of grass damp with early morning dew.



"PLAYGROUND No. 1"

In true whimsy, Tamondong says this depicts a world where animals and humans are able to communicate.

In some works, the artist remembers Cavite, which has increasingly been developed beyond recognition. The wistfulness with which he says he wishes the Cavite of old has been retained shows his deep-seated yearning for the guileless days of childhood.

"Playground No. 1" and "Playground No. 2," are, as their titles imply, scenes that imply frolic and fun. "Tickle," the only work done on wood, includes a doorknob as a component; it refers to a favorite pastime.

"Blue Roof" simply refers to his house, distinct against its surroundings not only because of the color of its top, but also because it is home.

Along this line of sentiment is "Siesta." Against a darkening backdrop of blue, a lopsided tower of lavender and apple-green shows different figures resting on its outcroppings. The impression is that of a tree devoid of leaves, with an animal resting on each branch.

The artist welcomes this interpretation, and concedes that the piece is, indeed, inspired by the comfort of taking a break with closest buddies. This particular painting is adorable in the sense that it would remind one of a child's height chart.

Dripping paint is common in a Tamondong piece because he enjoys the process, which for him is free and innocent. He creates in very much the some way, gleaning from his surroundings, sometimes seeing an object that would inspire reminiscence, and everything else just falls into place.

That his abstract compositions result in animation, reminiscent renditions are the whimsical twist to this selection.

On a whim, Tamondong refreshes and reminds the viewer that abstract art may not necessarily be baffling, but, on the contrary, literally elicit childlike wonder and enjoyment.

Rubio's Kayumanggi beauties, Veneracion's dark secrets

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE ART scene has witnessed recently the flowering of nostalgic tribute to the past—people and houses and sundry artifacts of history have suddenly come alive in canvases.

This clearly reflects a deep-seated infatuation with a time that seems irretrievably lost, a yearning for lost innocence, a flighty release from the harsh realities of a world teetering between madness and destruction.

In the work of Dominic Rubio, we find the mirror of history reflecting the image of the Filipino woman as seen in her day-to-day chores, through her apparel and accessories, and her own passionate affairs with the muses.

Titled "Kayumanggi," the artist's 40-piece collection of oil paintings (Galerie Joaquin, until Dec. 11) resonates with the kind of romantic melancholia associated with faded photographs and artifacts weathered by time and in danger of being obliterated from memory.

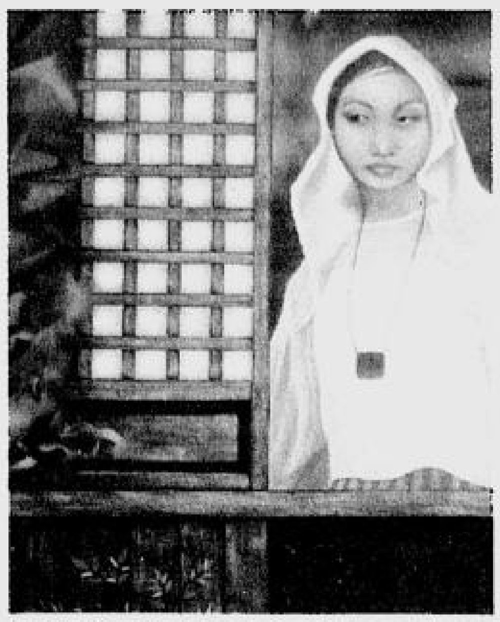
Rubio has had two solo shows both on the subject of women and Mother and Child, but in this exhibit, he has finally come into his own, his brushwork solid and secure, his artistic transformation as finely articulated in the figures and faces of his women as in the surrounding landscape.

Born in Paete, Laguna, Rubio took up Fine Arts at University of Santo Tomas, majoring in Commercial Arts.

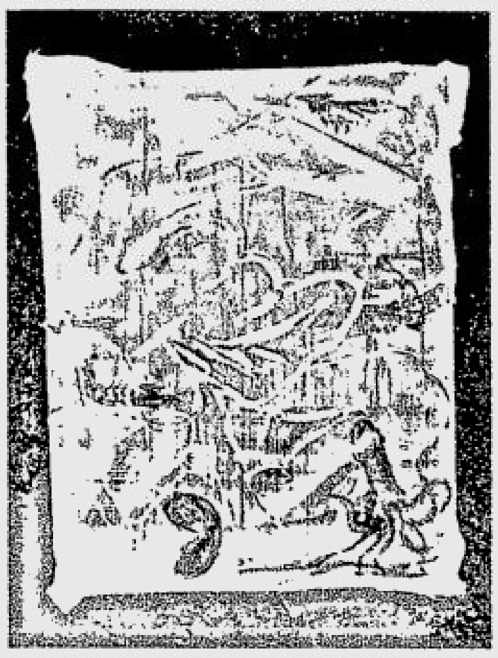
After working briefly for a multinational advertising company, he got a job as artist at the Pearl Farm in southern Mindanao. He traveled around the Caraga region in northern Mindanao and Lake Sebu, living among the Mandaya and T'boli communities as well as with Bilaan and Badjao folk. He later lived on the islands of Camiguin and Samal, interacting with the natives like Gauguin.

The "Kayumanggi" show evolved from Rubio's previous preoccupation with the image of the indigenous woman, as seen in his "Grand Exposition" exhibit at Ad Infinitum a couple of years ago. Gone now are the self-conscious touches and highly cluttered details.

There is now a sense of greater intimacy and graceful awkwardness as he tries to remain true to the spirit of the period. Inspired by the photographs in Jonathan Best's "A Philippine Album," Rubio strives to capture the old-fashioned decadence in the dainty portraits of women from different social classes, wearing the costumes and accessories of the era—a *fin de siecle memento mori* that Bencab must have pioneered.



"BABAE sa Bintana," by Dominic Rubio



"SEAFOOD Romance," by Mikhail Veneracion

Rubio is at his best when his subject is shorn of extraneous detail while remaining true to form, such as "Kayumanggi," where her only gesture is to lift the hem of her copious *saya*. In "Dilag ng Balintawak," the subject holds in one hand the tip of her *salakot*.

The woman in "Babae sa Bintana" seems to be a paragon of innocence but is betrayed by the chinky eyes darting through the half-opened *capiz* window. The faces—and gestures—reveal a multitude of emotions eloquent in their simplicity.

Other pieces extol the industry and diligence of women as in "Paluwas ng Maynila," or show them in the company of other women as in "Huntahan sa Beranda."

Rubio has a single painting of a family in a playful mood, set against his trademark landscape of bamboo and cathedral trees.

Rubio's Ethnic suite is markedly different in spirit. The artist literally goes to town by incorporating a liberal dose of fantasy in his execution, perhaps as foil to the restrained manner of his Filipiniana collection.

The show accomplishes what it set out to do. There is nostalgic resonance as the artist speaks of the quintessential charm of Filipino women—and tries to preserve what has been eroded by colonization, globalization and the exploitation of women.

Art in his blood

An artist who paints in the manner of modern expressionism is Mikhail Veneracion, son of second-generation abstractionist Roy and younger brother to actor-painter Ian. In his self-titled first solo show (Big Sky Mind, 66B Doña Juana Rodriguez, New Manila), the young Veneracion shows a highly irreverent sensibility that combines elements of Pop art, installation and graffiti in the name of experimentation.

In many of the pieces, the canvases were haphazardly folded, cut and framed on makeshift wood, their creases showing, and discarded objects like wires left dangling. While the medium is acrylic, Veneracion incorporates mixed media into the work.

In one piece, the image of excreta dominates, together with a portrait of King Philip V. The allusion, as gleaned from the title "All in Your Head," cannot be lost on the viewer, with painted text explaining the Indio's psyche.

The largely cavalier attitude toward composition and good taste is presumably the offshoot of the artist's view of modern commercial art, which is produced, marketed and emulated in today's gallery circuit.

The anti-gallery stance has a redemptive value for young artists like Veneracion, who prefer to work outside the highly regimented system of producing decorative art. We can only hope the anti-art stance will do the promising maverick much good in the future.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

Art that makes life bearable

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE STILL life can be compared to two other art forms. Like the étude, it can be an exercise to practice some points in technique, in developing and exploring tone, structure, rhythm, nuance.

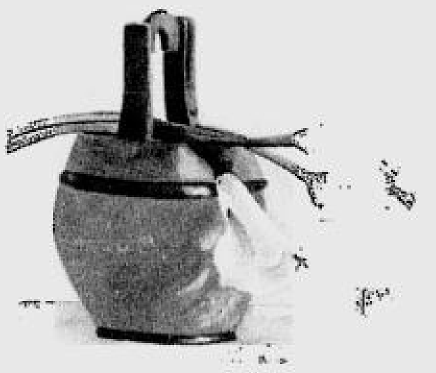
Like the haiku, it records the transitoriness of life, the impermanence of relationships, the fragility of things, mortality, intimate feelings, perishables.

Through the centuries this painting genre has been largely dismissed as too pretty, too decorative, or not complex enough to be considered high art. How wrong-headed an appraisal!

The still life can actually stand on its own artistic merit. It can either be light or heavy, whimsical or grave, depending on how an artist uses it. It may be delicate but it can be meaning-laden, indeed, like the sonnet, or the haiku for that matter.

A skillful as well as thoughtful use of the still life is displayed by Rona Buenaseda-Chua in her eponymous exhibit, her first solo show, until Dec. 7 in The Crucible Gallery at the Artwalk, 4/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall.

Here are 37 delectable pieces—10 in colored pencil on paper, 27 in watercolor on paper—depicting flowers and comestibles: *sugpo, alimasag,* fish and shellfish, fruits and vegetables, roses, daisies, lilies. Many of them are surprisingly beautiful, not only for their formal composition and colorism but also for their choice of subjects.



"YELLOW Lilies"

Among the loveliest: "Daing na Bangus," "Inukit sa Kahoy," "Yellow Lilies," "Still Life" 1, "Fruits with Vase," "Fruits on Scarf," "Alimango," "Seafood with Veggies" 2, "Hipon sa Dahon."

The color application is largely bold and concentrated, in primary and secondary colors, yet Buenaseda-Chua can be capable of subtle shading. All her pieces are in bright happy hues.

"I don't want to use black, unless for accent," says the artist. "I want images and color *na nakakagaan ng loob at modo, nakakawala ng problema.*"

And it's not just still life she's capable of, either. She has also done Mother and Child, landscape, a waterfall series.

She has worked in mixed media, using acrylic, rope, lace (for impression on acrylic). At one time she worked in the cubist style, in monochrome of light green, blue or pink.

She used to do abstraction in acrylic, but stopped when she got married.

"Abstract work must be big," she says. "*Kailangan ng malaking* space. When I started a family, *lumiit na'ng* space. Sometimes I had to do my painting on bed."

An Assumption Convent alumna from grade school through high school, she took up Fine Arts, major in Art Education, at College of the Holy Spirit. She belongs to the Tuesday Group of artists, and teaches in her own art studio in Greenhills and Makati.

Among her favorite artists are Joya, Manansala, Anita Magsaysay-Ho, Rembrandt, Cézanne. She also loves graphic artist Erte, whose work she describes as "*malinis, makikita mo bawa't* line, whimsical *pero iba ang dating.*"

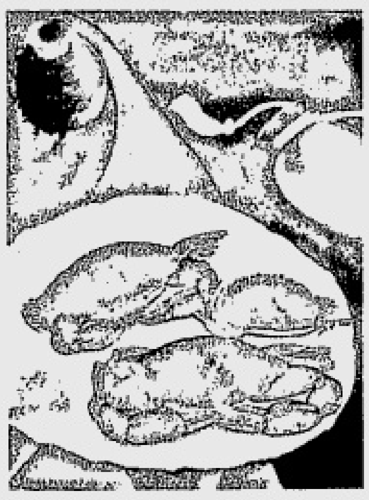
She also acknowledges as a great influence her teacher in Chinese painting, Hau Chiok, whose work has inspired the exquisite Orientalism in her own work.

"The purpose of my art is to make the world a better place to live in," she says.

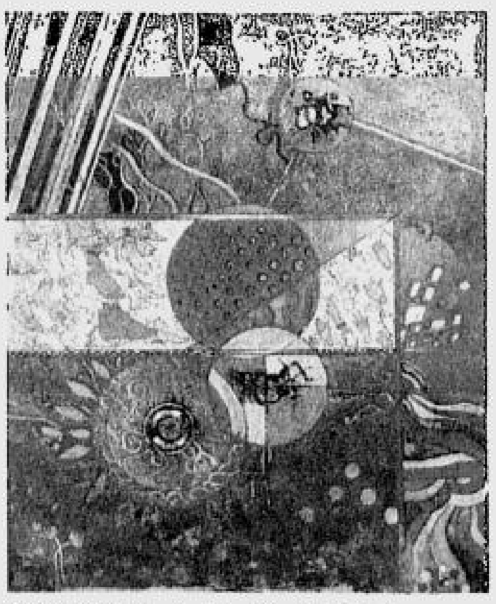
This personal testament she puts to further practice by giving part of the proceeds of this exhibit to the Studium Theologiae Foundation, which helps in the education of diocesan seminarians.

Some artists think art is for self-expression, while others use it to record, interpret or analyze the world and the human condition. The lowlifes make it serve their self-aggrandizement or delusion of immortality.

To make life bearable—isn't that a valid reason?



"ALIMANGO"



"MOTHER Earth," by Virgilio Aviado

Why not a 'tiangge' of art works?

From page D1

Avellana Cosio, Araceli Dans, Antipas Delotavo, Brenda Fajardo, Roberto Feleo, Edgar Fernandez, Emmanuel Garibay, Raul Isidro, Alfredo Liongoren, Justin Nuyda, Ramon Orlina, Bernard Pacquing, Mario Parial, Impy Pilapil, Susan F. Roces (not the actress), Norberto Roldan, Ady Baens Santos, Soler Santos, Roy Veneracion, Philip Victor, Nestor Vinluan and Phyllis Zaballero.

"We solicited works from the artists," said Hildawa. "The agreement is that 50 percent of the declared market value goes to the artist."

The objective of the auction is to raise funds for the CCP's visual art programs. "We want to renew next year our acquisitions program, which has been dormant for the past 25 years," Hildawa noted.

The CCP collection, which is strong on works from the 1960s to the 1980s, has to be updated because the younger generation is not represented.

"If we don't have funds, we might not be able to purchase the best works, even at a discounted price," Hildawa said. "We can't rely on donations from the artists because these may not be the best."

The bidding will start at half the market value of the artwork. The tickets, incidentally, cost P1,500, which will entitle the holder to cocktails, a musical program, raffles (T-shirts, deluxe books, CD-Roms, Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra subscriptions, fine prints), capped by a grand raffle for an overnight stay at Westin Philippine Plaza and one sculpture by Impy Pilapil.

Touring exhibit shows creative works of gifted kids

CJ de Silva and Romeo Rosete's paintings have drawn a wide circle of admirers, including art professionals. They were just children when they first stained their little hands with paint to finish murals and canvases.

Piano prodigy Regina Montesclaros' little fingers hit the keys at five. String player Pocholo Gutierrez's first love at age four was the violin; he then turned his attention to the cello.

Paulina Gutierrez started harmonizing the piano at four, then moved on to play the violin at six. He performed the classical masters—Bach, Mozart and Tchaikovsky.

Dom Bulan sews string of words together for beautiful essays and poetry. Lean Leviste has shown an exceptional proficiency in numbers at the tender age of 10. Future astronomer James Flores is exploring the complexity of the universe at the very young age of six.

And so, Wyeth, in support of giftedness, continuously provides nourishment for gifted children while nurturing their creativity and promoting awareness on their exceptional gifts.

For this year's celebration, Wyeth has launched a touring exhibit.

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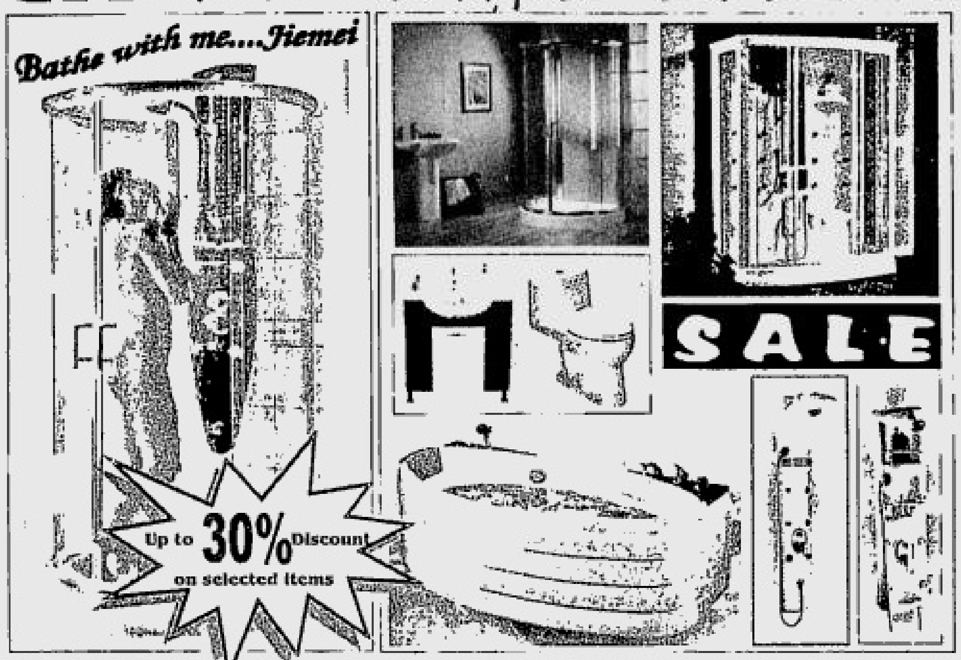

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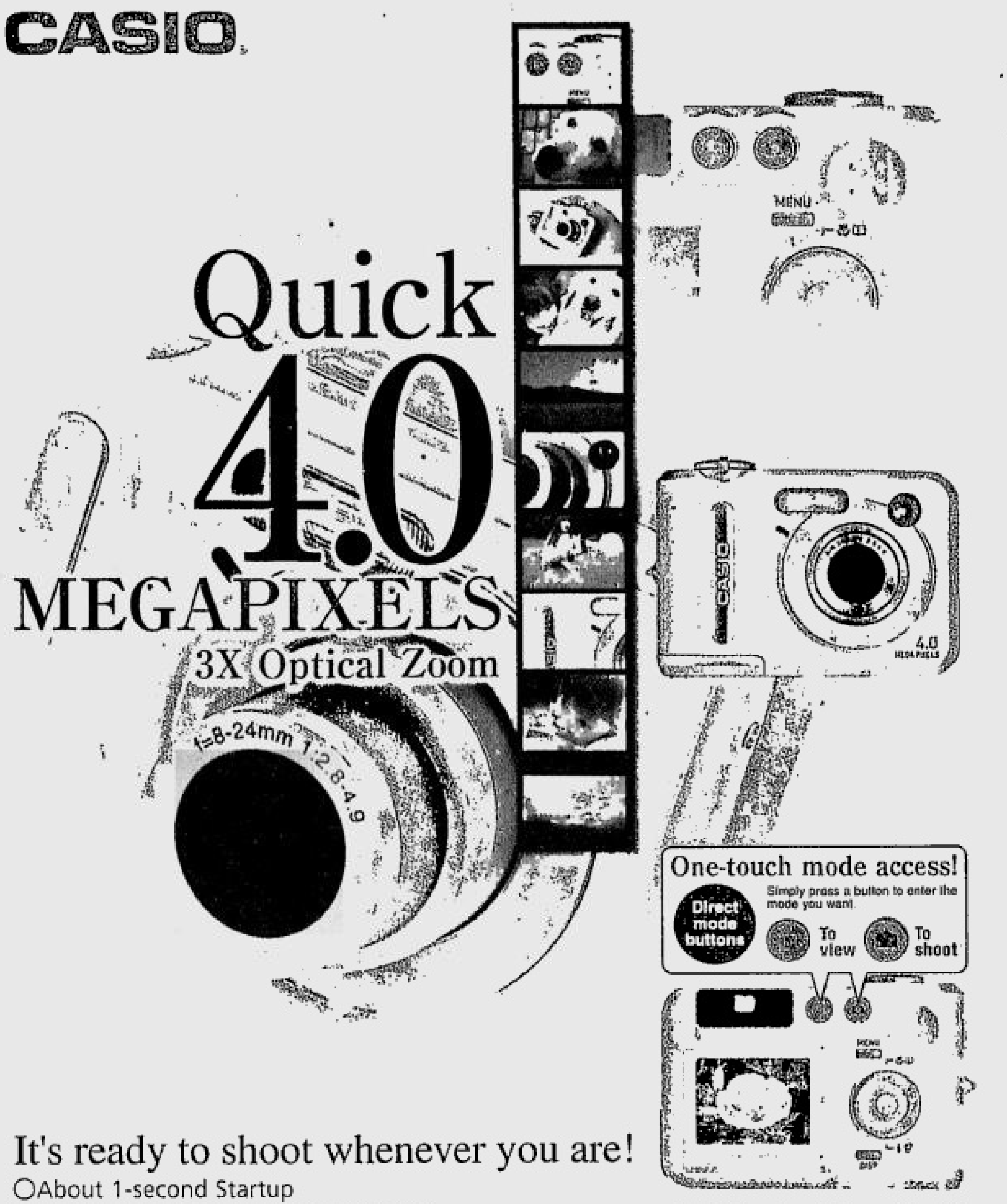

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Visualizing the Scriptures

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE ART of Ricardo Gerri Dueñas harks back to Dali, Klimt, Caravaggio, Mannerism, all the way to the Renaissance. In other words, it lacks decorum. In short, decadent.

Such a sensibility Dueñas possesses that the casual gallery-goer is both repelled and attracted upon stumbling on his show "Biblikal," seven religious compositions in oil on canvas, until today in The Big & Small Art Co. at the Artwalk, 4/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall.

The exhibit, subtitled "Makabagong Paglalahad" (or "modern interpretation"), displays religious art one can hardly call "pious." Rather, these are secular interpretations of religious themes.

Dueñas' brand of surrealism infuses new blood into the ancient narratives, turning the familiar into something rich and strange.

His mother being a high-school literature teacher, he says he saw as a child a lot of books just lying around in the house, such as illustrated ones of mythology from Greek to Norse. What fascinated him most, though, was the Bible, with the narratives illustrated by paintings of Rubens, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Dürer.

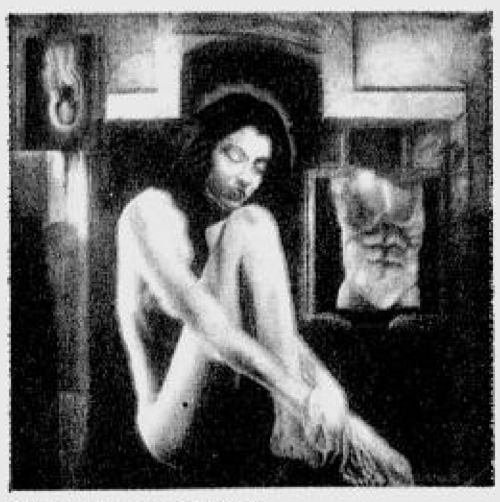
Those were his first inspirations when in Grade 4 he started drawing "*mga* Kristo-Kristo." Thus developed his passion to illustrate those Biblical episodes.

"Paraisong Nawala" is his version of Paradise Lost, and here is presented an image more forceful than depicted by Masaccio in "The Expulsion from Paradise."

In fact, it looks horrifying—as the artist has fused the Fall of Man with the Revolt of the Angels, and Adam becomes Lucifer plunging into hellfire, the archangelic wings broken. The same finger that touched him with life is now an accusatory finger.

Sweaty sexuality

In "Judith," the Jewish woman is contemplating the body of the sleeping Assyrian general just before cutting off his head. Her face is shrouded with dark intentions, and an unearthly light casts a deathly pallor on her body.



"AT Nabulungan si Eba"

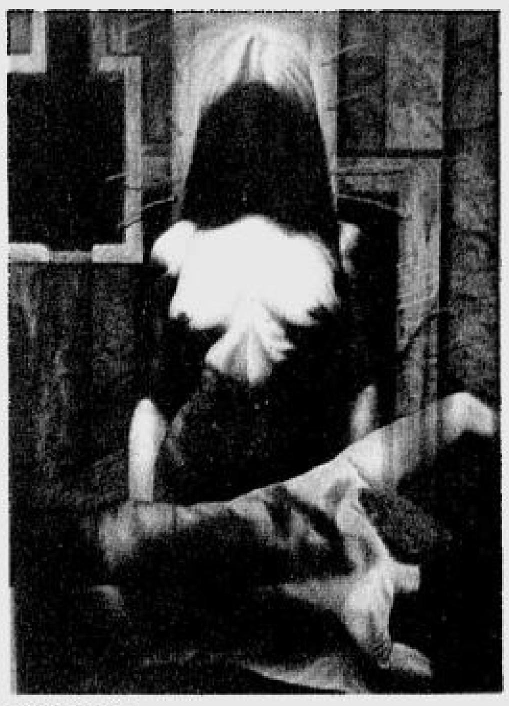
Here, no sword is shown, but an ugly gash of red running on the wall could be a portent of the slaughter—or a metaphoric correlative of the vulva, as Judith used sex in luring Holofernes to his doom.

The artist reveals he had been inspired by versions of Klimt, Caravaggio and Roberto Gonzalez Fernandez for this one.

"Anghel ng Exodo" depicts the death angel Azrael gazing at the body of a son of Egypt—one of the 10 plagues visited upon the land of the Pharaohs. Improbably, this image has a frankly homoerotic character. (Frankly, we don't know where it came from. Caravaggio?)

"Magdalena" carries on with the tradition of Mary of Magdala as a harlot, but the image is so thoroughly modernized the woman now looks like a disco queen on a striptease. Her identity wouldn't have been recognizable if not for the jar of scented oil in a niche, because even that most Christian emblem, the crucifix, she wears like one of Madonna's fashion accessories. The whole image is dripping with sweaty sexuality, overpowering even the Crucified Christ at the back.

"Susanna" is straightforward enough in limning this tale of innocence in the face of hypocrisy and deceit, showing the eyes of the lecherous elders gloating over the bathing beauty—so straightforward, in fact, that the back view of the naked maiden occupying half of the canvas comes in-your-face.



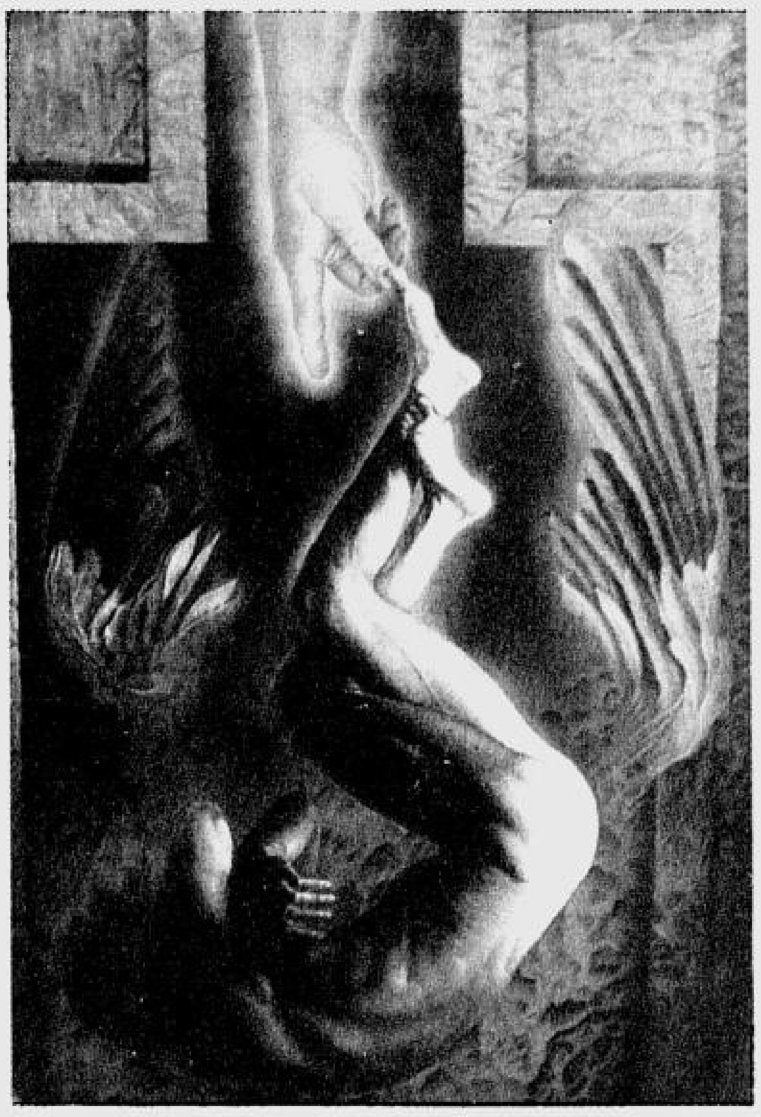
"JUDITH"

"At Nabulungan si Eba" is a portrait of a forlorn woman (Eve) surrounded by a male torso (Adam's ribs), a proffered apple (the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil), and a subliminal image of a greenish whisperer (the enemy of man). The imagery, composed of isolated images formally arranged, is a rather literal encapsulation of the first chapter of the Genesis.

The human form

"Juan Bautista" depicts John the Baptist as a weird hybrid: a woman's delicate face on a man's muscular body, with a cowl of animal skin for braid of hair. What's more unsettling, the saint looks too naked, even for a nude. (It must be the artist's frontal approach.)

Excluded from the exhibit at the last minute—because it could come "too strong" for the casual gallery-goer—is "Salome."



"PARAISONG
Nawala"

It depicts the daughter of Herodias as a pert teener contemplating her prize after performing the Dance of the Seven Veils, strands of hair becoming black rivulets of blood running down her body. The head of John the Baptist is shown not on a silver platter but on a curdling surface of brilliant red.

The rampant nudity eroticizes even death. The artist admits he is, indeed, exploring this unholy marriage of the erotic and the tragic.

He points out these pieces are a celebration of the human form, something he is still exploring, which obviously he can't freely do if it were swaddled in fabrics. He says he is at ease in composing both male and female bodies, though he finds the female anatomy a little harder to depict, particularly the proportion.

"*Mas nahihirapan ako sa* lighting," he laughs. "*Dati,* solid *ang* color *ko. Kung* flesh tones, flesh tones. *Ngayon, nag-iiba.* Because I'm using more shadows, so I have to do more highlights."

All the images are framed by window-like structures that look like niches or foils rendered in straight lines. The artist says it's a design element he has taken from photographs his mother took during a pilgrimage in Jerusalem.

Strangely, this architectural detail has the effect of putting those religious-turned-secular images back to the realm of iconography.

"Balancing is easy, I just have a center figure, but for the surrounding elements I compose an average of 10 sketches," says the artist. "*Ang pagplano ng* colors *ang medyo matagal.*"

One piece takes 2-3 weeks to finish, and he works daily, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., seven days a week.

Rich coloration

He says he can't work with acrylic, as it is too flat and quick-drying for his compositions. "You can't blend it and it's hard to manipulate for my kind of work, which needs blending."

His art is drenched with Caravaggism: dramatic use of chiaroscuro, with an inordinate fondness for the golden glow ("rich deep colors, with strongly accentuated shadows"); forceful pictorial vision; religious scenes suffused with a lowlife air; seeing old subjects in a new light.

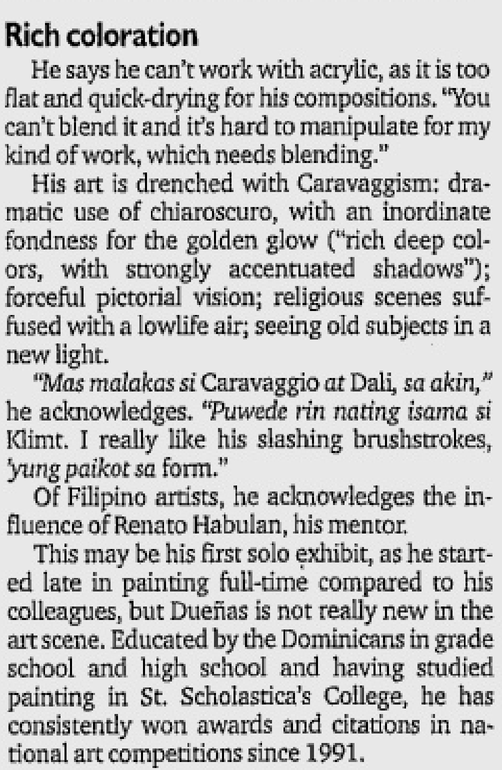
"*Mas malakas si* Caravaggio *at* Dali, *sa akin,*" he acknowledges. "*Puwede rin nating isama si* Klimt. I really like his slashing brushstrokes, *'yung paikot sa* form."

Of Filipino artists, he acknowledges the influence of Renato Habulan, his mentor.

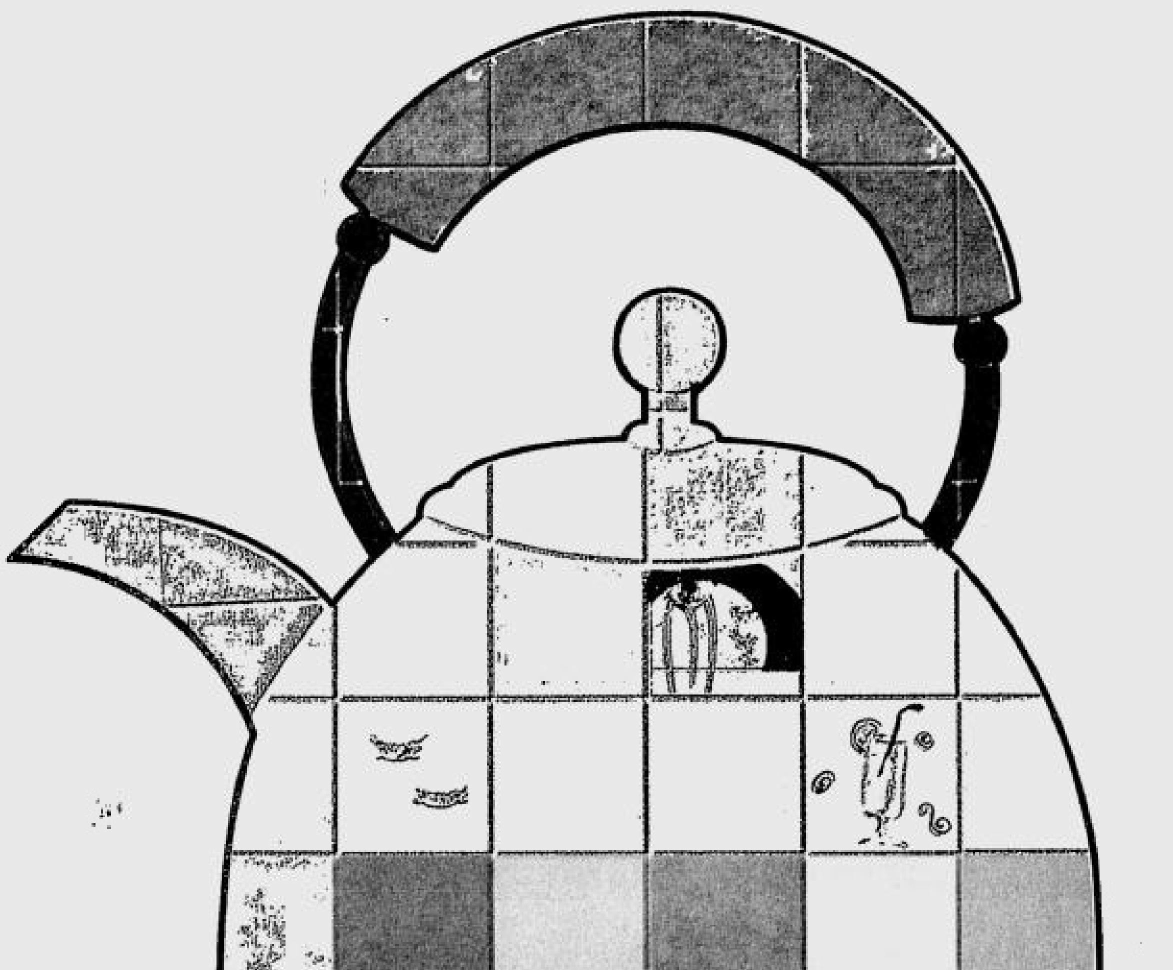
This may be his first solo exhibit, as he started late in painting full-time compared to his colleagues, but Dueñas is not really new in the art scene. Educated by the Dominicans in grade school and high school and having studied painting in St. Scholastica's College, he has consistently won awards and citations in national art competitions since 1991.

He won the Juror's Choice (thrice) in the Art Association of the Philippines Painting Competition; the Juror's Choice (thrice) in the Philip Morris Philippine Art Awards; the Grand Prize (twice) in the Letras y Figuras Painting Competition. He has been a perennial finalist or honorable mention in the Shell, Metrobank, PLDT art competitions.

Obviously, the art world is just opening up for him.



"SALOME"



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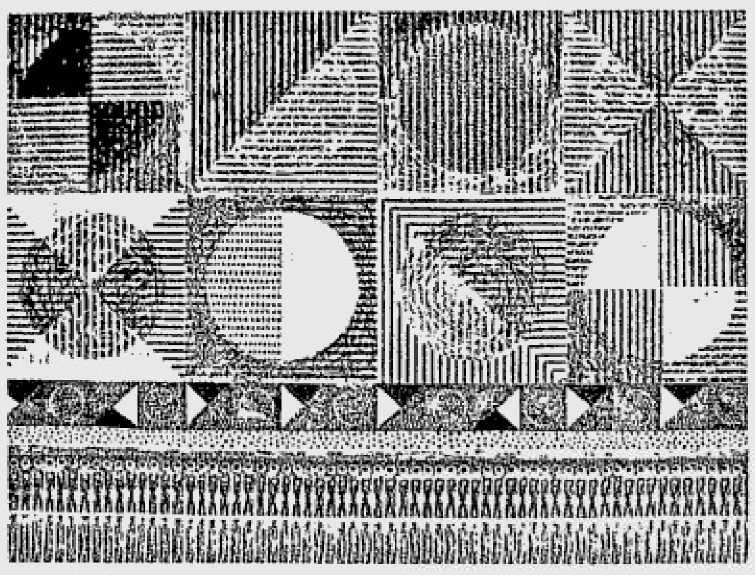

"CYCLES"

An artist who runs in circles

By Lisa Ito
Contributor

AFTER 28 years in the US, artist Antonio Daroy revisits the Philippine art scene via a fifth solo exhibition on Dec. 5 at Mag:net Gallery in Makati. Titled "Glimpse of Faith," the show will feature Daroy's abstractions done in two triptychs and a six-paneled work, all in acrylic on canvas.

The show attests to the evolution of the artist's style. Still practicing in the Philippines during the turbulent '70s, Daroy quickly gained recognition for his utilization of multihued and intricately patterned surfaces. The artist sustains the personal propensity to celebrate the aesthetics of decorative and symbolic patterns, although this time using a vastly different visual approach.

In contrast to Daroy's earlier years, where he alternately shifted from deriving forms from Oriental and *batik* aesthetics, and exercising a return to geometric abstraction by using dots and lines to depict representational themes such as landscapes and still lifes, the artist now approaches the line between abstraction and representational work by returning to the core of artistic elements.

"Presently, my art has gone back to the basic forms of circles, squares and triangles. It has evolved from familiar objects like nudes, landscapes and still lifes where in the '70s, '80s and even the '90s were the norm," the artist says.

AN ARTIST/ E3

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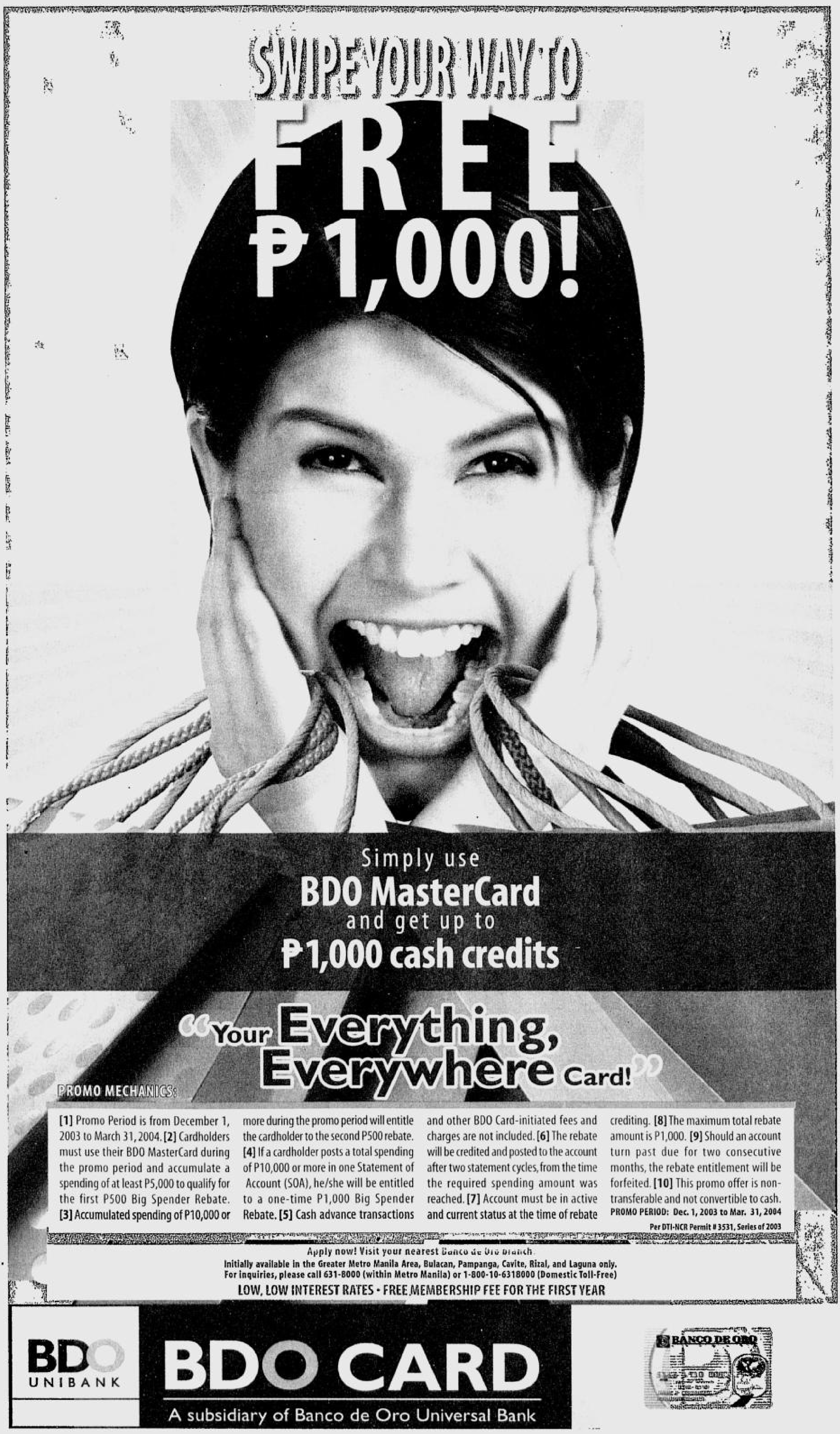

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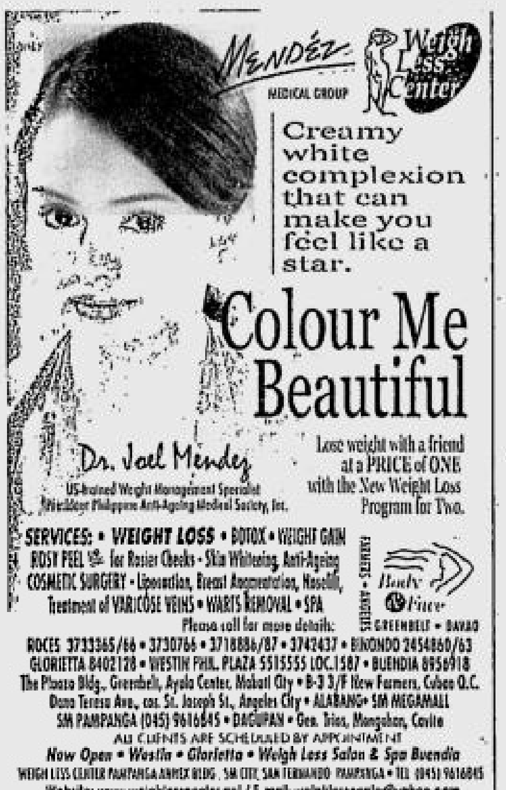

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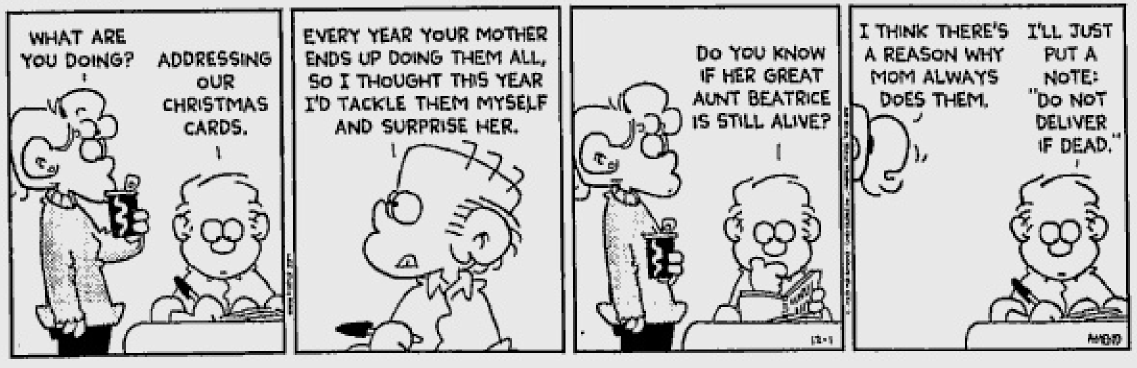
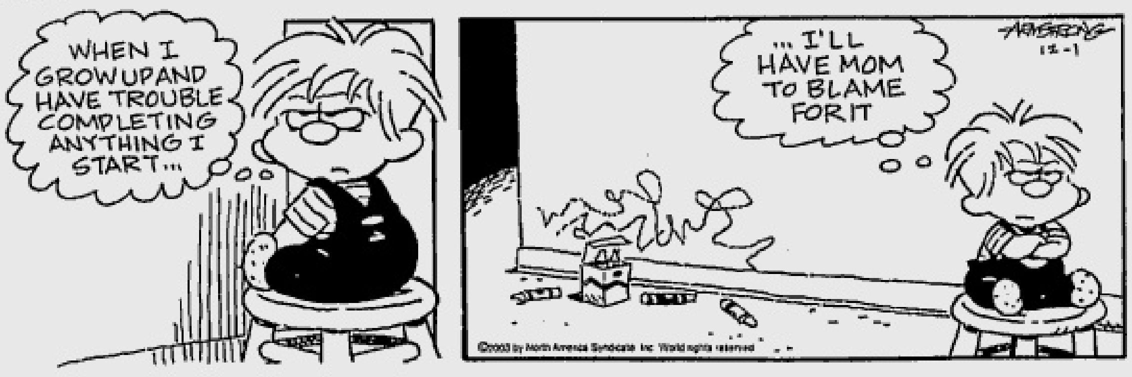
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
ADDRESSING OUR CHRISTMAS CARDS.
EVERY YEAR YOUR MOTHER ENDS UP DOING THEM ALL, SO I THOUGHT THIS YEAR I'D TACKLE THEM MYSELF AND SURPRISE HER.
DO YOU KNOW IF HER GREAT AUNT BEATRICE IS STILL ALIVE?
12-1
I THINK THERE'S A REASON WHY MOM ALWAYS DOES THEM.
I'LL JUST PUT A NOTE: "DO NOT DELIVER IF DEAD."

MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WHEN I GROW UP AND HAVE TROUBLE COMPLETING ANYTHING I START...
...I'LL HAVE MOM TO BLAME FOR IT
ARMSTRONG 12-1
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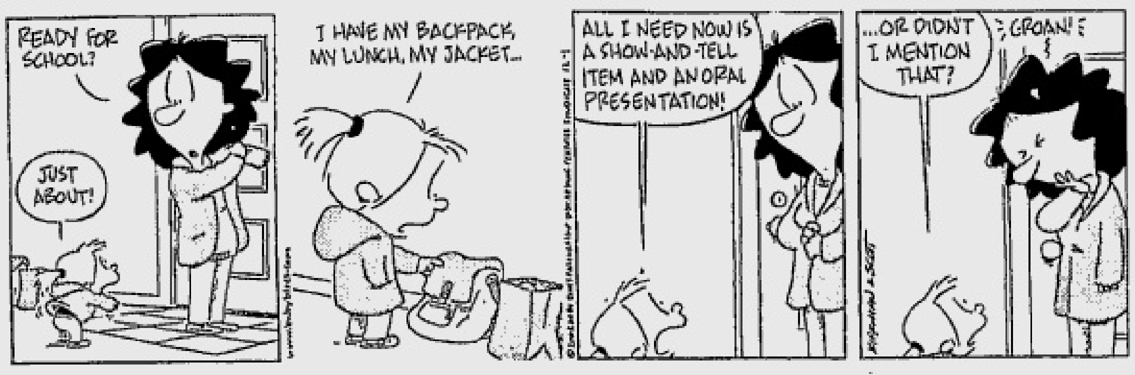
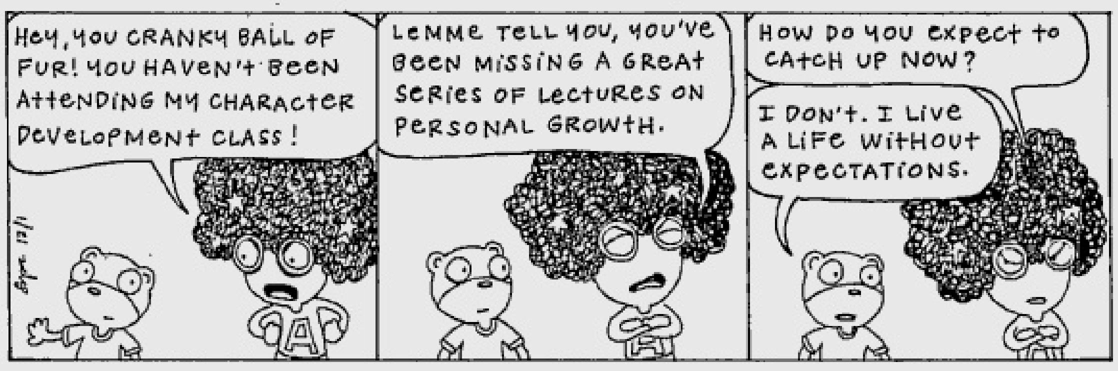
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


READY FOR SCHOOL?
JUST ABOUT!
I HAVE MY BACKPACK, MY LUNCH, MY JACKET...
ALL I NEED NOW IS A SHOW-AND-TELL ITEM AND AN ORAL PRESENTATION!
...OR DIDN'T I MENTION THAT?
GROAN!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, you cranky ball of fur! You haven't been attending my character development class!
Lemme tell you, you've been missing a great series of lectures on personal growth.
How do you expect to catch up now?
I don't. I live a life without expectations.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're dynamic and extroverted. People want to be in your presence. You're an energetic, outspoken free spirit. It's important that you have the freedom to express your views. Publicly cavalier and nonchalant, privately you are complex and serious. Exciting new beginnings await you in the year ahead. Be bold! **Birthdate of:** Bette Midler, actress/singer; Woody Allen, writer/producer; Lee Trevino, golfer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): A friend or possibly an eccentric acquaintance could introduce you to a new revelation or a completely different way of thinking today.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Surprises connected with your possessions or shared property might occur today. Someone might want to borrow or give you something, or propose a new and unusual deal. Be open; at least listen.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Conversations with practically everyone are quite fascinating today. Your curiosity is aroused. The gossip around you is interesting. You're all ears.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might learn some bright, new ideas that could favorably impact your job today. Some surprising tidbit can benefit you now, so be on the lookout for fresh news.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Something happens today—perhaps romantic and flirtatious—that makes you feel excited and alive. New discoveries, meeting new people and fresh insights stimulate you now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day to tackle old problems. New solutions could present themselves. That's because you are thinking out of the box; you're not tied to old mental patterns.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): In all your communications with others, you can expect startling ideas to pop up. Even boring people seem interesting today! Make an effort to talk to people—even strangers.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a good day to study scientific subjects, computers, math and technology. You want to have a better understanding of how the world works.

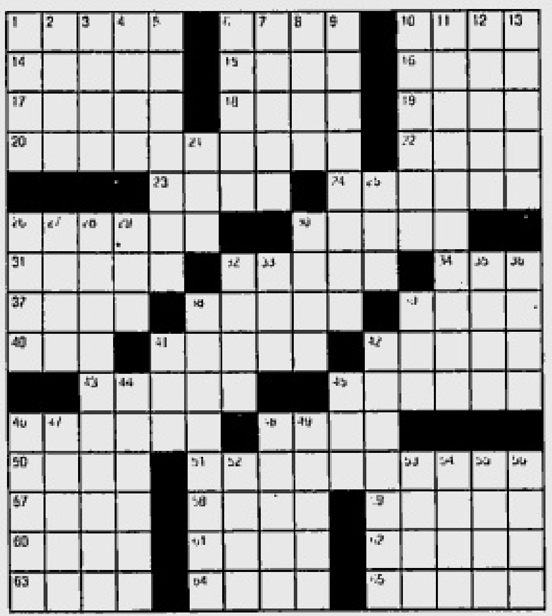
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You won't want to spend today in a ho-hum routine. You want to start this week off in a different way. You want more pizzazz in your life!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a strange day, because you could start off in one direction and end up in a completely different area. It's not your fault. Provoking circumstances are unpredictable today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Communication with others is quite fascinating today. Even people you think you know can startle or surprise you. It's comforting, really.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): If you try to adhere to a rigid routine, you will find today disruptive and nerve-racking. However, if you allow spontaneity into your life, you will learn something new and exciting.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Nellie G. Becker
Leesburg, GA
12/1/03

ACROSS
1 Moderator Winfrey
6 Puts in stitches
10 Swing at
14 Awaken
15 End of demo?
16 Faithful
17 Asia Minor region
18 Friend in France
19 Latvian capital
20 Magnificent framework
22 Part of a list
23 "Airplane" star Robert
24 Affair participants
26 Member of the lighting crew
30 Allude (to)
31 Lewd looker
32 Landing pier
34 Addams Family member
37 Set the pace
38 Rampages
39 Mythical monster
40 Presidential monogram
41 Persian contemporaries
42 Alternative
43 "Guitar Town" singer Steve
45 Green club
46 Fiber palm
48 Map of lots
50 __ Stanley Gardner
51 No-frills jet
57 Weather grp.
58 Channel Island
59 Bring down
60 Abu Dhabi ruler
61 Art Deco designer
62 Addis __, Ethiopia
63 Electoral district
64 Alpine transport
65 Bobbing toys

DOWN
1 Genesis: abbr.
2 In need
3 Futhark letter
4 Gobi location
5 Highland plant
6 Hair-raising
7 Bombeck and others
8 Stand by
9 Pittsburgh players
10 Endeavor
11 Pen with perfection
12 Boring tool
13 Sides in sports
21 Fish with a long snout
25 Not at work
26 Links activity
27 Matured
28 Fire-eater's talent
29 Nourished
30 Piper's followers
32 Expansive
33 Garden tool
35 Birch or beech
36 Hawaii, before '59
38 Backslides
39 Giant Mel
41 Medical pic
42 Surpass in technique
44 Frightened, in the Ozarks
45 Trash in a review
46 Make fresh
47 Bouquet
48 Book div.
49 Preferences
52 Playful escapade
53 Gray wolf
54 Not at home
55 Moses' mount
56 Periods

P	A	R	A	P	E	T	S	■	L	A	P	T	O	P
S	L	O	V	E	N	I	A	■	I	N	L	O	V	E
A	T	W	I	T	T	E	R	■	S	N	A	R	E	R
L	O	B	S	■	I	R	A	■	T	U	N	E	R	S
T	O	O	■	F	R	O	■	W	A	N	■	R	A	P
E	N	A	B	L	E	D	■	A	B	C	■	O	W	E
R	A	T	I	O	■	■	U	G	L	I	■	S	F	X
■	■	■	T	R	O	U	S	S	E	A	U	■	■	■
A	D	S	■	E	L	L	E	■	■	T	R	I	B	E
N	U	T	■	S	E	A	■	B	R	E	N	N	E	R
I	R	E	■	C	A	N	■	R	E	D	■	F	E	N
M	A	L	D	E	N	■	P	A	S	■	R	U	L	E
I	N	L	A	N	D	■	A	C	I	D	O	S	I	S
S	T	A	N	C	E	■	P	E	N	I	T	E	N	T
T	E	R	S	E	R	■	A	S	S	E	S	S	E	S

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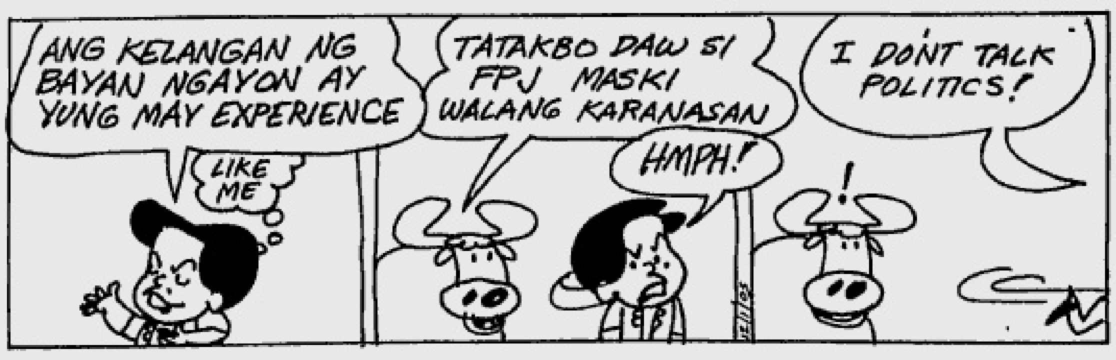
12/1/03

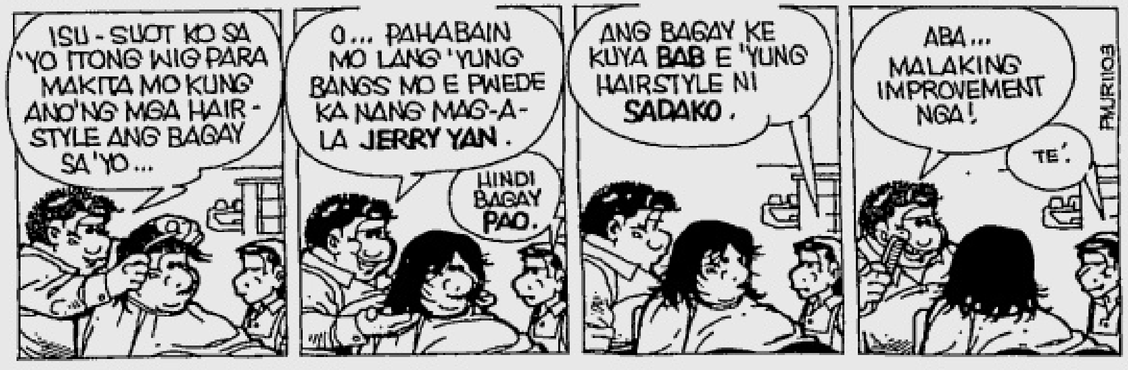
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANG KELANGAN NG BAYAN NGAYON AY YUNG MAY EXPERIENCE
LIKE ME
TATAKBO DAW SI FPJ MASKI WALANG KARANASAN
HMPH!
12/1/03
I DON'T TALK POLITICS!

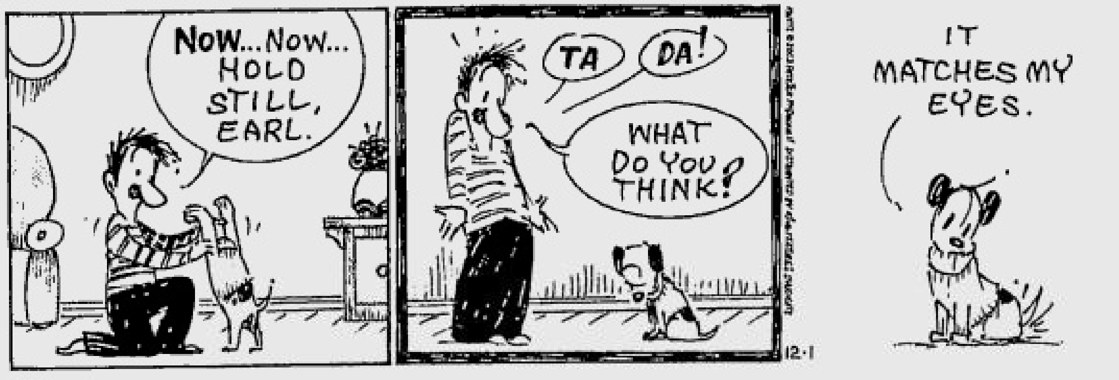
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ISU-SUOT KO SA 'YO ITONG WIG PARA MAKITA MO KUNG ANO'NG MGA HAIR-STYLE ANG BAGAY SA 'YO...
O... PAHABAIN MO LANG 'YUNG BANGS MO E PWEDE KA NANG MAG-A-LA JERRY YAN.
HINDI BAGAY PAO.
ANG BAGAY KE KUYA BAB E 'YUNG HAIRSTYLE NI SADAKO.
ABA... MALAKING IMPROVEMENT NGA!
TE'.
PMJR1103

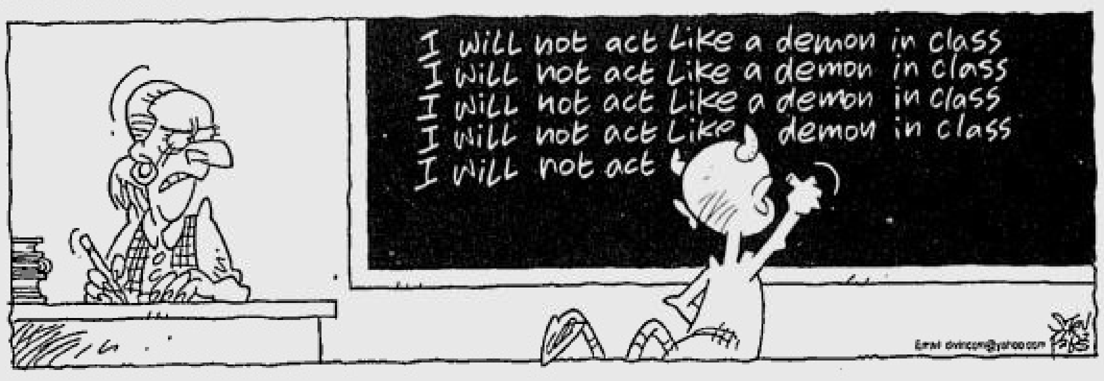
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


NOW...NOW... HOLD STILL, EARL.
TA
DA!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
12-1
IT MATCHES MY EYES.

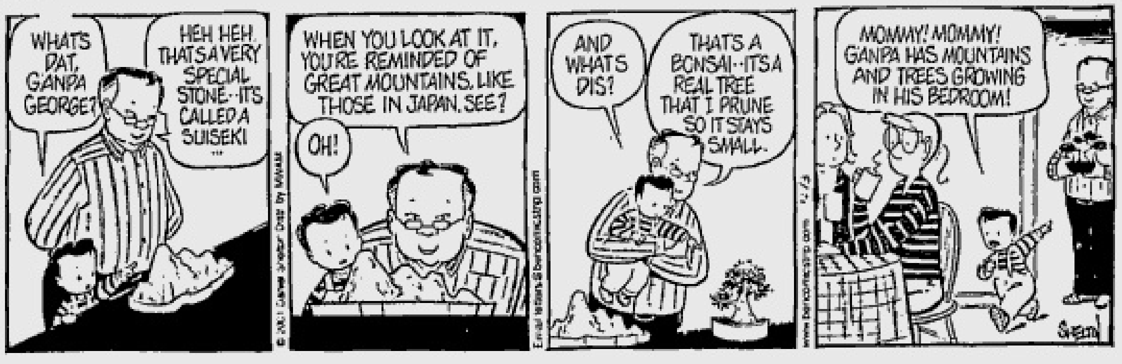
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I will not act like a demon in class
I will not act like a demon in class
I will not act like a demon in class
I will not act like demon in class
I will not act
Email divincom@yahoo.com

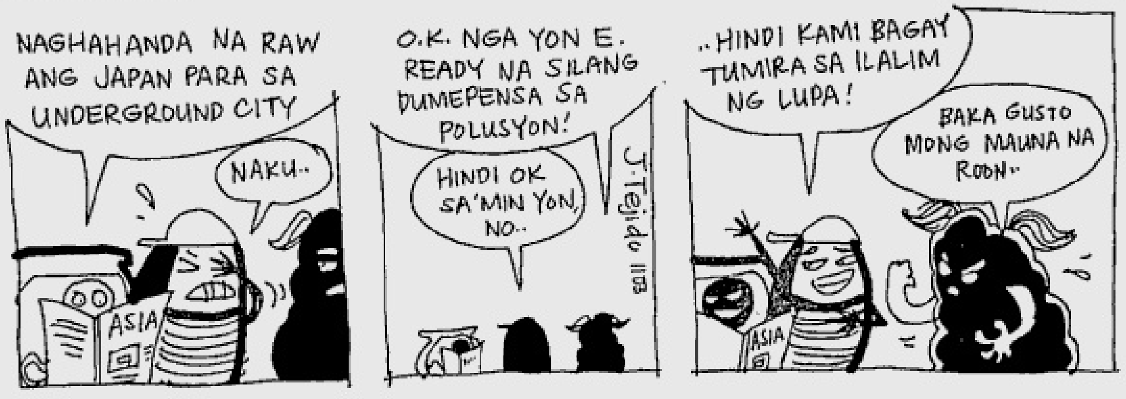
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


WHATS DAT, GANPA GEORGE?
HEH HEH. THATS A VERY SPECIAL STONE--ITS CALLED A SUISEKI...
WHEN YOU LOOK AT IT, YOU'RE REMINDED OF GREAT MOUNTAINS, LIKE THOSE IN JAPAN, SEE?
OH!
AND WHATS DIS?
THATS A BONSAI--ITS A REAL TREE THAT I PRUNE SO IT STAYS SMALL.
MOMMY! MOMMY! GANPA HAS MOUNTAINS AND TREES GROWING IN HIS BEDROOM!

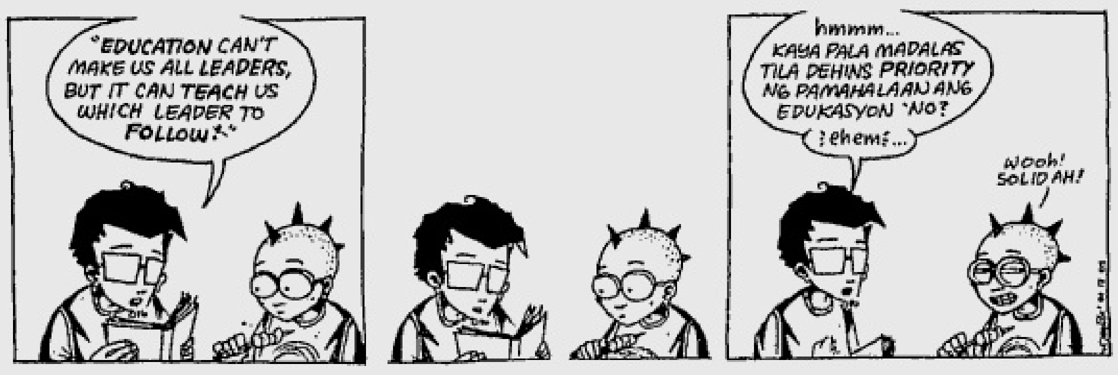
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAGHAHANDA NA RAW ANG JAPAN PARA SA UNDERGROUND CITY
NAKU..
ASIA
O.K. NGA YON E. READY NA SILANG DUMEPENSA SA POLUSYON!
HINDI OK SA'MIN YON, NO..
J. Tejido 1103
..HINDI KAMI BAGAY TUMIRA SA ILALIM NG LUPA!
BAKA GUSTO MONG MAUNA NA ROON..
ASIA

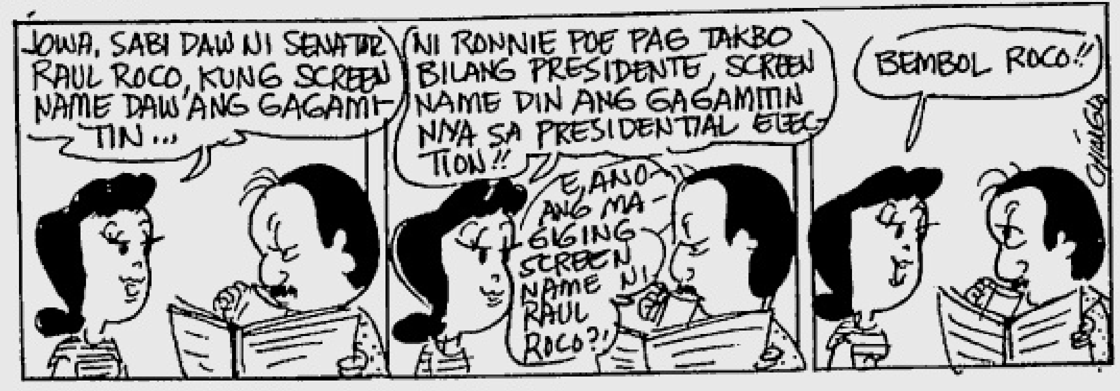
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


"EDUCATION CAN'T MAKE US ALL LEADERS, BUT IT CAN TEACH US WHICH LEADER TO FOLLOW."
hmmm... KAYA PALA MADALAS TILA DEHINS PRIORITY NG PAMAHALAAN ANG EDUKASYON 'NO?
ehem...
WOOH! SOLID AH!

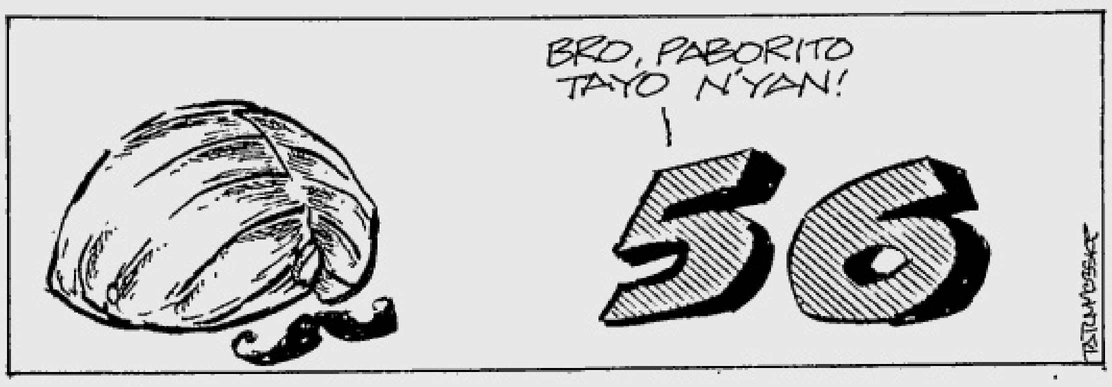
LOVEKNOTS

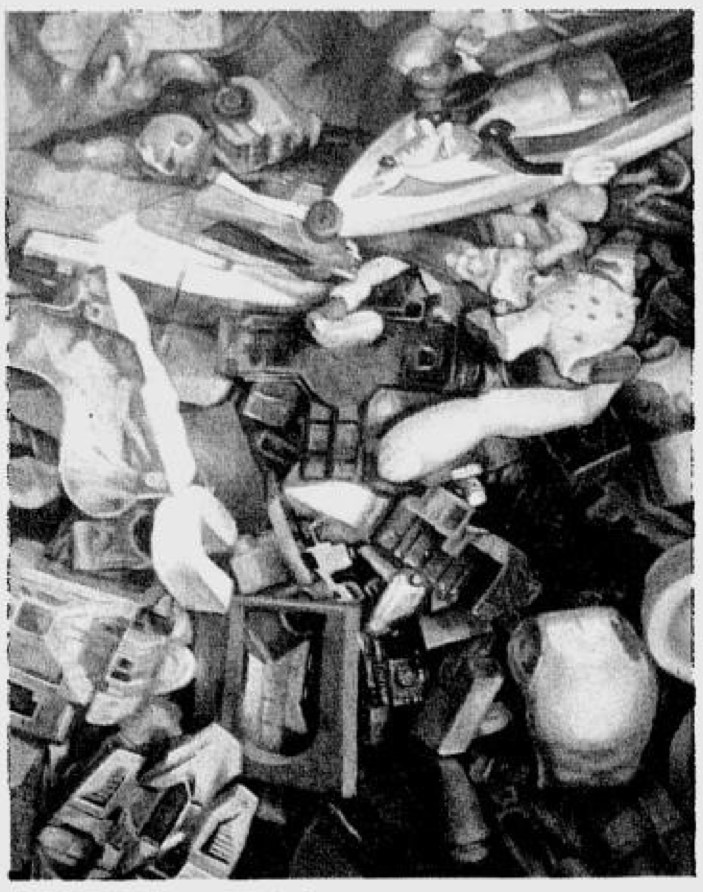
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, SABI DAW NI SENATOR RAUL ROCO, KUNG SCREEN NAME DAW ANG GAGAMITIN...
NI RONNIE POE PAG TAKBO BILANG PRESIDENTE, SCREEN NAME DIN ANG GAGAMITIN NIYA SA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION!!
E, ANO ANG MAGIGING SCREEN NAME NI RAUL ROCO?!
BEMBOL ROCO!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BRO, PABORITO TAYO N'YAN!
56



"LOVE Toys," by Fernando Sena

Austria at Finale, Llaguno-Ciani at Duemila

VISUAL ARTS

FINALE Art Gallery mounts Antonio Austria's works on Dec. 3-14 at the Artwalk, 4/L, Megamall A. Austria's themes are as perennial as ever. His still lifes, genre scenes, human figures reappear but with a freshness that always delights. An award-winning artist and a long-time and respected art teacher at University of Santo Tomas, Austria remains at the top of his form.

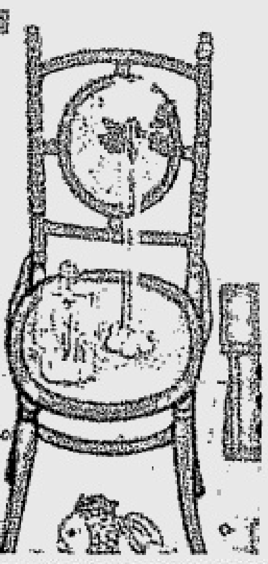
KAISA-ANGELO King Heritage Center presents 52 modern ceramic sculptures by six Chinese deaf and mute ceramic artists and 28 oil and watercolor paintings by four Filipino mouth and foot artists. The exhibit is ongoing until Dec. 5. The center is located at Anda and Cabildo Streets, Intramuros, Manila.

GALLERIA Duemila showcases Lina Llaguno-Ciani's "Strings and Things" on Dec. 2-15 at Megamall, Mandaluyong. The artist presents a series of oil on canvas paintings that depict her personal selection of everyday objects.

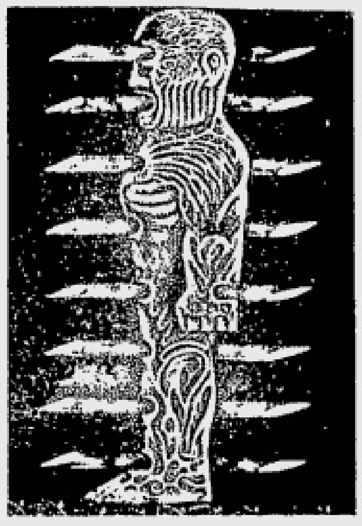
THE PHILIPPINE Heart Center's Art Gallery features Fernando Sena's "Toys" until Dec. 6 at East Avenue, QC.

THE DRAWING Room showcases Susanito Sarnate's "Tianda" on Dec. 6-18 at Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati. The artist pays homage to the vendors of various wares, food and fruits of La Carlota City, Negros Occidental.

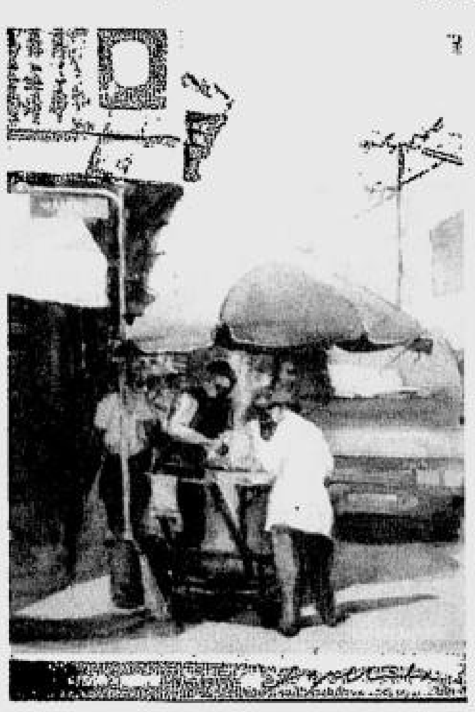
AYALA Museum presents Melissa Francesca Bantegui's "Sayaw" on Dec. 5-31 at the G/F, old Makati Stock Exchange Bldg., Ayala Avenue, Makati. Her works have been inspired by a performance by the Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company and Reynaldo Alejandro's book, "Sayaw: Philippine Dances."



"STILL Life," by Antonio Austria



"PAARAK," by Nunelucio Alvarado will be in "Raga-Ak: Black Artists in Asia Exhibition" on Dec. 2-15 at SM Megamall A, Mandaluyong, together with works by Nunelucio Alvarado, Charlie Co and Dennis Ascalon.



"MAMI King" by Jes Gellada is part of the exhibit "Kulay ng Panahon," a two-man show with Rudolf Gonzales at the Galeria de las Islas, Silahis Center, 744 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila. Call 5272113.

ARMANDO Ramos is holding his sixth solo at the Fontana Baracas, Fontana Leisure Parks, Clarkfield, Pampanga, until Dec. 31. The show presents Ramos' skills in landscape and figural renditions.

An artist who runs in circles

From page E1

Total non-representation

However, such a "celebration of patterns," before tending toward a stylization of figurative themes, now borders toward total non-representation. Daroy now channels the energy of the free-flowing and frenetic forms of the past into more controlled and precise paintings.

In works such as "Me Myself and I" (2003) and "Couples" (2003), Daroy repeats the basic geometric elements such as dots and lines, and forms such as circles and squares, to create nuanced, layered and intricate yet orderly compositions.

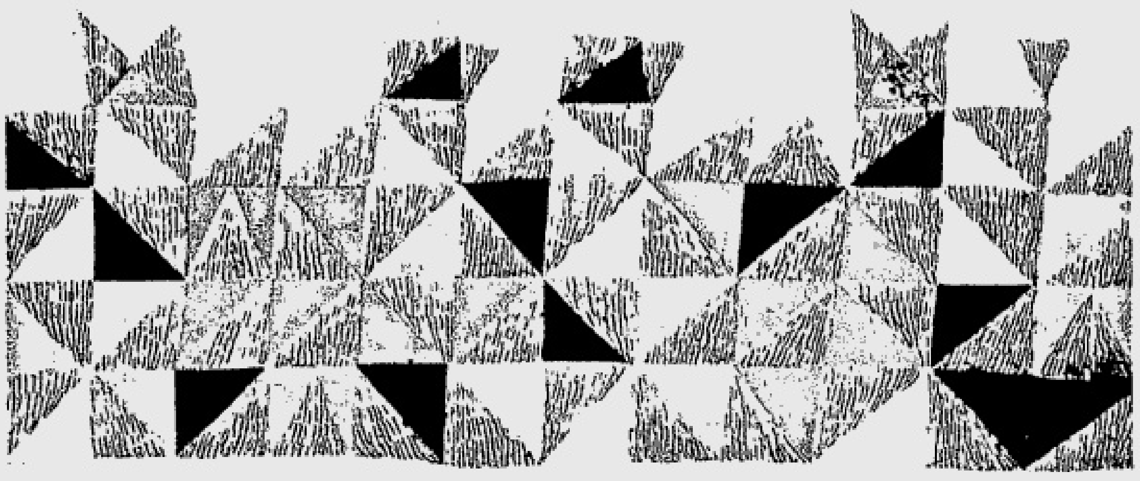
His use of bold, bright colors persists, evidently. This time, however, these are juxtaposed in stripes over one another to create the suggestion of banded transparencies and sheer, overlapping planes. The artist likewise infuses the logic of symbolism in his work.

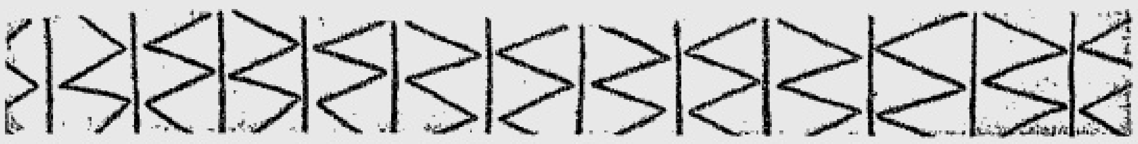
"Circles would mean self-containment, squares stability and triangles mobility," he says.

A graduate of University of the Philippines, Daroy also studied Graphic Design at the Philadelphia Graphic Arts Association. He has since then participated in numerous group shows and has held touring exhibitions throughout the United States and Germany with contemporaries Nestor Vinluan, Norberto Carating and Alfredo Liongoren.

He has participated in several annual juried art exhibitions, the latest of which was the 29th Annual Juried Art Exhibition at the Hopkins House Gallery, Camden County, New Jersey, this year. The artist currently works full-time in his studio in New Jersey, where he has been based since 1976.

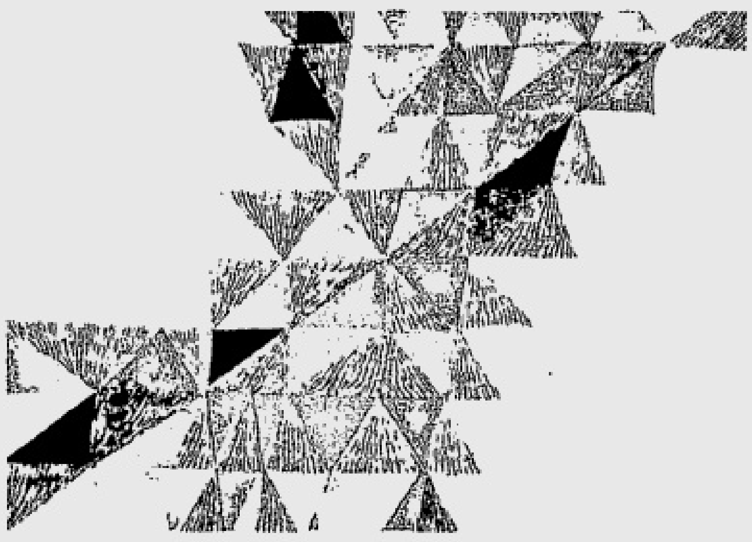
"Glimpse of Faith" opens Dec. 5, 6 p.m., at the Mag:net Gallery Makati and runs until Dec. 21. Call 817-7895 or email magnet@info.com.ph





"CITY Afloat"

Tony Daroy opens a homecoming show at Mag:net Gallery



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North Luzon	Reynaldo S. Mendoza Panampunan, Tarlac City	Edelyn Ramos Consolidated Drug-Tarlac
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South Luzon	Mary Jane A. Vicuña St. Therese St. Olv. Buraguis, Legaspi City	Edielry Yanzon Escort Drugstore
South Luzon	Aurora M. Marasigan Villa Macaria Subd. Candelaria Quezon	Erlyn R. Cedeño South Star Drug-Candelaria
South Luzon	Aurelio De Silva Buenavista East Candelaria Quezon	Susan R. Motilla South Drug Drug
Visayas	Remedios Lagayada Punta Tabuc, Roxas City Capiz	Glenda Castiyano Farmacia Benjamin I
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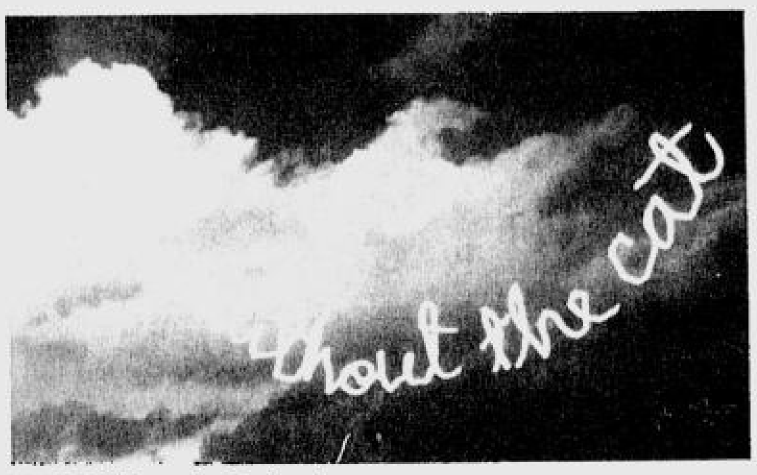
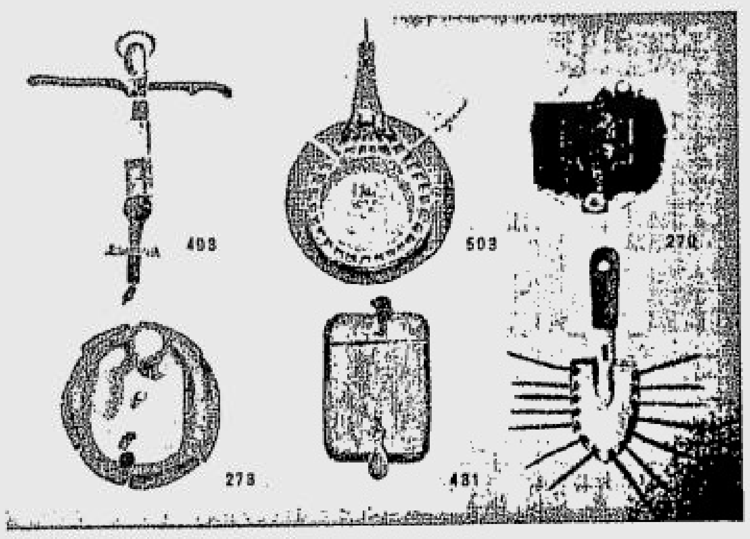


"GRIN Without the Cat" series



"OF SIXTH hearts, series no. 6"

In new show, Alcazaren grins like a Cheshire cat

JUAN Alcazaren straddles the boundaries between the surreality of random configurations and the precision or method inherent in scientific cataloguing and documentation, creating curious and unsettling juxtapositions in "Grin Without the Cat," which opens tomorrow, 6:30 p.m., at the Mag:net Gallery (The Loop, Eugenio J. Lopez Center, Quezon City).

The show consists of drawings in acrylic and ballpoint pen and small-scale works on canvas, which play around with dislocating parts out of their context to produce other objects and forms.

In his pen-and-ink on paper works, Alcazaren represents a series of small-scale assemblages featured in his last solo show at the Art Center, all of which were produced out of components from discards, industrial and household objects.

In "Grin Without the Cat," Alcazaren produces a mock documentation and cataloguing of sorts of these previous objects, similar to the formats used in botanical designs or specimen documentations.

What results is a visually intriguing and unsettling experience, where the viewer identifies with the logic of the composition, but probably not with the array of alien forms on display.

Alcazaren likewise composes these in acrylic and ballpoint pen on yellowed and faded sheets of graph paper, which creates a curious dialectic between contemporary artistic media and the impression of antiquity.

Meanwhile, Alcazaren's series of small-scale paintings done in acrylic, industrial paint and varnish ("Of Sixth Hearts") engages in a similar process. Here, the shapes formed by the assemblages are outlined and painted over in alternating layers of paint and varnish, shifting between transparencies and the flatness of graphic-inspired design.

Alcazaren was a Thirteen Artists Awards recipient of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) in 2000.

The show runs until to Dec. 16. Call 4100995 or e-mail magnet@info.com.ph

Romance series gives away phones

IN case you didn't win in the recently concluded My Special Valentine (MSV) Nokia 7650 Raffle Promo, here's another chance to own a new cell phone.

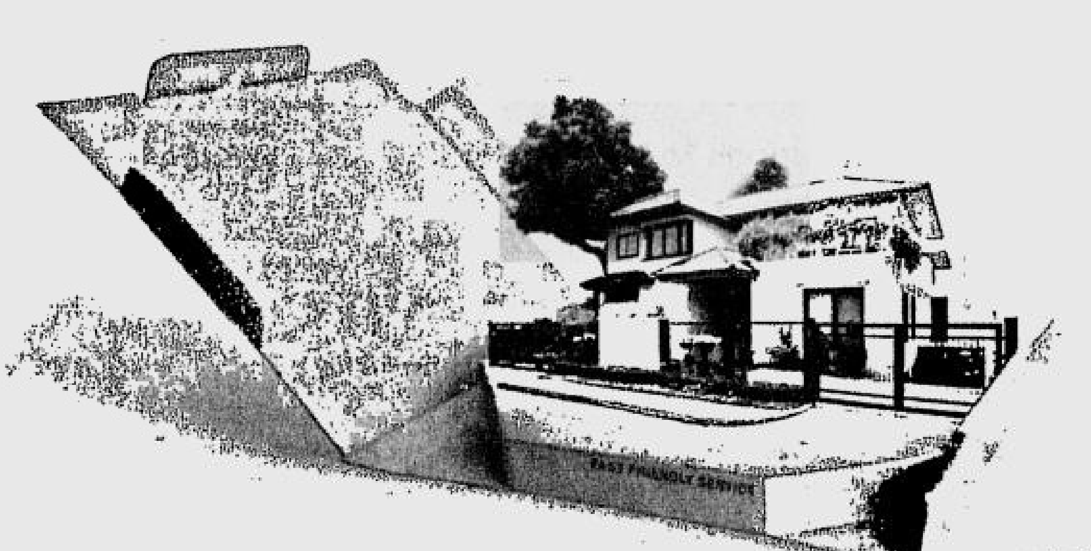
The Nokia 3650 Raffle Promo has just been launched by Bookware Publishing Corporation for the readers of MSV pocketbooks.

Starting this week, a monthly draw will be held with a Nokia 3315 at stake. Grand draw will be in September next year, where a Nokia 3650 will be given away.

For details, simply buy any of these MSV new titles: "Tender Deception," "Mapagkunwaring Puso," "Diamonds in the Sky," "For Keeps," "Just The Way You Are," "Revenge of the Heart," "Bakit Ikaw Pa Ang Minahal." "Kaya Mo Ba Akong Mahalin," "Tulungan Mo Akong Lumimot," "Ikaw Pa Rin Ang Mamahalin," "A Kiss Goodbye" And "Hindi Ko Nais Na Ibigin Ka."

Unused coupons in the previous promo campaigns will also qualify in the new promo. Call 6318894 or 6317811.

INTERNATIONAL artist Dr. Teruko Haga of Tokyo, Japan, will open her 55th solo exhibit at the Century Park Hotel tonight at 7. Guests include Department of Social Welfare and Development secretary Corazon Soliman and former Tourism secretary Mina Gabor. Proceeds of the show will go to DWSD projects.



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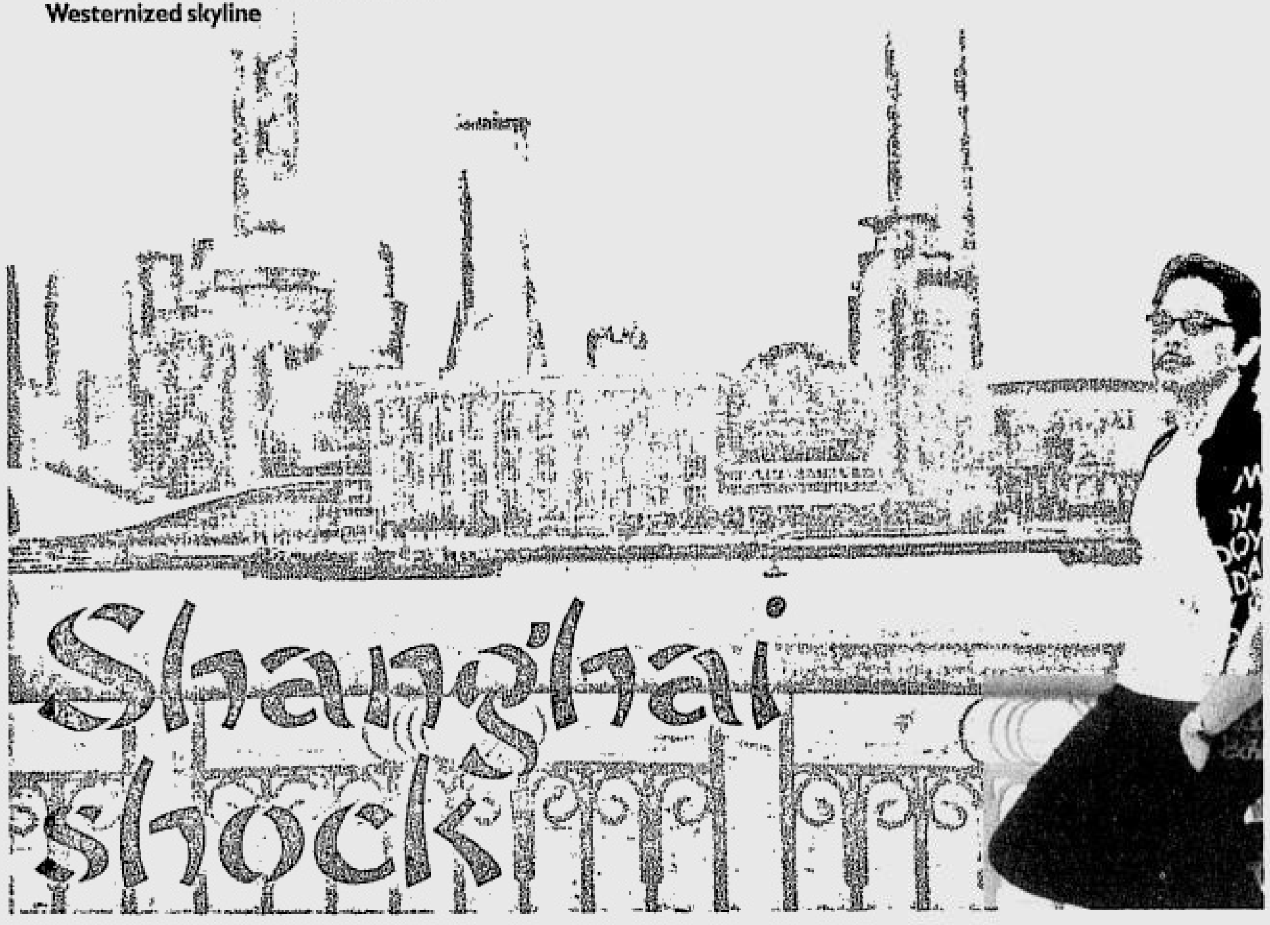
CHRISTOPHER De Leon soaking in the city's cosmopolitan, thoroughly Westernized skyline



Shanghai shock

'Mano Po' sequel writer finds China's socialist fiction and capitalist reinvention a challenge to the memory

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By Roy C. Iglesias
Contributor

A SCENE I wrote for "Mano Po 2" calls for the male lead character Antonio Chan, portrayed by Christopher de Leon, to return alone to China to visit an ailing mother after many years of separation. There, he meets again Lu-shui (played by Zsa Zsa Padilla), the woman to whom he had been betrothed before he left for the Philippines.

Emotional blackmail and the injunction of culture make him honor the promise to marry Lu-shui even if, back in Manila, a Filipina wife and two kids await his return.

In the film, the China that Antonio is going home to is a country emerging from isolation after its leaders have established diplomatic relations with the West.

It is a China that is just about to shed its image of cheerlessness and proletarian uniformity. It is a China that is so assured of its ideological grip on its citizens that it is willing to experiment on a consumer-driven economy.

It was the China I remember visiting as a writer for ABS-CBN's "Pep Talk" in 1989, a fortuitous trip that included a visit to Shanghai en route to Beijing, where I became an accidental witness to the historic pro-democracy rallies in Tiananmen.

"Mano Po 2's" China scenes transpire much earlier than '89, back when the mainland was just letting in a trickle of Western values.

But the much publicized trip to Shanghai of the film's cast and production staff, led by Regal Entertainment matriarch Lily Y. Monteverde and her daughter Roselle Monteverde-Teo, did not prepare many in the group for the modernity and highly Westernized changes in the city that welcomed us.

For those of us who haven't been to China for a long time or were visiting it for the first time, the Shanghai we saw was the opposite of the Shanghai we imagined.

No trace

Travel writers have dubbed Shanghai the Paris of Asia. To a certain degree, the city lives up to that title.

But it is far different from the Shanghai that charmed me back in '89. The city is now very cosmopolitan, with no trace of the egalitarian paradise that welcomed me 14 years ago.

Then, I was enamored of its exotic appeal, the monochromatic simplicity of people in their gray or dark-blue proletarian clothes crowding the streets in their bicycles, the major mode of transportation. Men and women pedaling back from work as night fell turned the streets into a spectacle of graceful motion that made it safe for pedestrians to cross.

Today, the biking throng has all but disappeared as cars of all models jam the highways. A decade or so ago, the common head gear was the Mao cap. Now, it is only sold as a souvenir item to tourists as the Chinese hardly wear it.

In '89, our Chinese hosts showed us around a village they proudly called Millionaire's Row. It was a cluster of houses where the more successful citizens lived "in style," but that meant having one colored TV set, an electric stove, a telephone and a bicycle. The houses were only as big as the ones that we see at Sampaloc district, more like Manila's lower middle-class apartments.

Today, the successful lifestyle China is proud of is very much like what we see in the rich enclaves of Metro Manila. The high-rise residential buildings and the occasional Porche and Mercedez-Benz are clear indications Mainland Chinese have already changed their idea of what it is to be a "millionaire" under socialism.

A year ago, the cast and staff of "Mano Po 1" that included Kris Aquino, Maricel Soriano and Ara Mina, under the helm of Joel Lamangan, went to Beijing in winter, courtesy of producer

SHANGHAI/ F2

THE "MANO PO" cast enjoying a break by wandering around the former imperial grounds at Yu-Yuan Garden

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Shanghai shock

From page F1

THE ENTIRE ensemble poses before a black luminous marble wall inscribed with the words of Mao Tse Tung in Long Hua Park.

Lily Monteverde.

At the time, Beijing already introduced me to the surprisingly vast changes that had taken place in the mainland, although the transformation that I saw was not instantly jolting, because the dull color of winter, with people on the streets bundled up in their winter clothes, gave the Beijing landscape a somberness reminiscent of China during the Mao era.

However, our trip to the bargain markets where imitation goods of designer brands were sold openly, and our exposure to the capital's colorful nightlife, immediately disabused our minds of communist stereotypes.

"TV Patrol's" Mario Dumaual, who toured with us then, was amazed at the Westernization of Beijing. Filipino friends Grace Monteiro of the Brazilian Embassy in Beijing and Judith Los Baños of Rosedale Hotel and Suites treated Mario, talent manager Manny Valera and myself to drinking and dancing in a night spot that featured a Latin band, certainly a decadent bourgeois activity that had been condemned during a bygone era.

But this was Beijing, the nation's capital. And I said to myself that perhaps this decadence was a false front meant to draw in tourists only on this part of the mainland. I still believed that outside of Beijing it was still pretty much like the Bamboo Curtain era.

But the Shanghai tour shattered all that was left of the belief that the backward, slow-paced Communist China with its ubiquitous billboards of chair Mao still existed in reality somewhere in the vast land.

Of course, Shanghai and Beijing represent only a fraction of the mainland. But widespread consumerism and its values-altering impact can't just be contained in these two major cities. Somehow, it is difficult for the outlying areas to remain insulated from the culture of commercialism.

China's largest city, Shanghai last summer was ablaze with colors, its charming landmarks providing the breathtaking backdrops for pictorials of the artists who traveled with us: Susan Roces, Lorna Tolentino, Zsa Zsa Padilla, Christopher de Leon, Judy Ann Santos, Carmina Villaroel, Jay Manalo, Cogie Domingo, Alessandra de Rossi and Chynna Ortaleza.

The city immediately cast its spell on director Erik Matti, who was inspired by the sights to come up with a visual style for the music video of the theme song for "Mano Po 2." Ably assisting him in shepherding the cast were directors Joey Gosiengfiao, Boots Plata, Manny Valera and Joann Banaga, along with cinematographer J.A. Tadena and production designer Rodel Cruz.

The strict traffic rules in Shanghai prevented our bus from unloading right where we wanted to have the pictorials, so the group had to do a lot of walking in Shanghai's warm weather.

The rule prohibiting motorists from stopping and unloading anywhere on the main roads accounts for the smooth flow of vehicular traffic in the congested areas. With Shanghai's population of more than 12 million, one would expect the traffic situation to be a nightmare.

No more

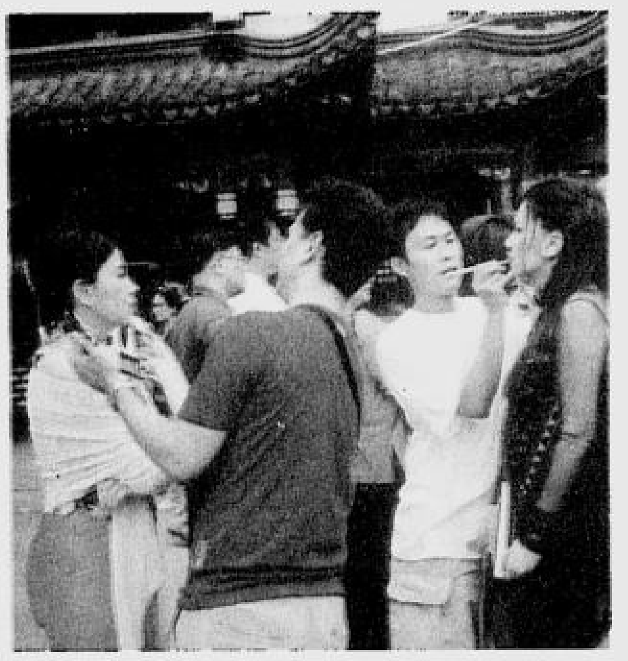
But Shanghai's mystique is no more. Modernity has robbed it of its enigma as the romantic city now bears the hallmark of globalization—a Kentucky Fried Chicken billboard amid signage in Chinese ideograms, a Starbucks coffee shop tucked away in a shopper's market, a McDonald's "M" logo competing for attention in the cluttered skyline.

It was Christopher de Leon's first visit to Shanghai, and he confessed he did not want to pass up the chance even if he saw the punishing four-day schedule of nonstop pictorial that would take him and his colleagues from one tourist spot to another dressed in Chinese costumes. Somehow, there was something about the mention of Shanghai that made him want to join the tour.

As we walked from one pictorial site to another, Christopher was quick to produce his nifty video camera and take shots of places and people. When not posing for pictures, he was quietly watching people.

You could tell that his power of observation was at work, picking up body movements, the telling gestures, the rhythm of Chinese speech and the manner of social interaction that he would surely incorporate in his film portrayal of the Chinese-Filipino patriarch.

Susan Roces, ever regal in her posture, was an inspiration for everyone. She was the group's biggest star, and yet she acted like one of us, sans the air of superciliousness that usually accompanies show biz fame.



THE STARS being made up for a photo shoot on the sidewalk near the ancient Yu-Yuan Garden

In a small store selling trinkets, she got a good discount when columnist Wilson Lee Flores, who was traveling with us, introduced her to the owner as the future First Lady of the Philippines.

Zsa Zsa Padilla's commitment to the project showed not only in her eagerness to participate in the activities, but also in her early mastery of her role as the second wife.

As the character Lushui, she speaks Fookien in the film. Asked how she was coping with the role, she answered by spouting in flawless Fookien excerpts of scenes from my screenplay.

Lorna Tolentino displayed an early grasp of her coveted role as the third woman in the patriarch's life. She already knew her Fookien lines.

Mother Lily, who travels regularly to the mainland as an investor, gave us a shopping tip. In haggling, we should always ask for an 80-percent discount of the quoted price. If someone sells us an item for 100 yuan, we should offer to buy it for only 20.

At first, we could not make ourselves do it, thinking that it sounded like an insult to the seller. But Jay Manalo did just that and it worked.

Body language also played an important part in bargaining. Boots Plata and Dolor Guevarra quickly mastered the art of pretending disinterest in the middle of the bargaining process, acting as if ready to leave when the seller refuses to give in to the requested discount.

Again, the trick worked. The vendor would usually run after them, grudgingly offering to sell on their terms. And true enough, at a price that was 60-80 percent lower than the original!

Pashminas and fans were the best-sellers since almost everyone bought one for *pasalubong*.

Jay bought a Patek Philippe watch at a bargain. With its elegant design, unscratchable glass face, strap, Swiss movement and serial number engraved on its back, Jay was certain he had a real buy.

But Lorna Tolentino was doubtful. Knowing how clever businessmen the Chinese were, she was sure Jay bought a fake. How a watch that looked genuine from all angles and bore the earmarks of the real thing could be a fake became a subject of discussion.

Tatus Aldana, who traveled with us as one of the production's consultants, surmised that Jay's Patek was a product of re-assembly. It had genuine watchband, case and push pins, and its internal mechanism was also Swiss, but of the inferior variety—which made the whole watch a fake just the same. Jay could not wait to get back to Manila to have the timepiece checked by experts.

To survive in a place where communication was difficult because of the language barrier, one must have a shopping strategy. Mine was to stick with Mother Lily, who spoke Chinese. She graciously did the bargaining for me.

Christopher's strategy was to buy only small items which were easy to pack.

Alessandra de Rossi was the opposite of Christopher in that she bought huge items. They were so huge we wondered how she would pack them come checkout time.

Judy Ann Santos had to buy an extra traveling bag to store the items she bought.

REGAL dowager Lily Monteverde explaining her Chino-Pinoy opus to Susan Roces

BOOTS Plata, the author and director Erik Matti discussing last-minute revisions to the script

For real

The realization that the change in China was for real and irrevocable came to me on Nan Jing Road the night before our departure for Manila, when we went shopping 15 minutes before closing time.

Nan Jing Road is a pedestrianized, neon-lighted strip with modern department-store buildings lining both sides. In my hunt for souvenir items, I lost my way on my trip back to our group's meeting place.

A well-dressed Chinese man, possibly in his mid-20s, came up to me, struck up a conversation in Mandarin and quickly shifted to English when he realized I was a tourist. He offered to take me to a tavern.

There, he said, I could have my pick of girls—many of them college students who needed money for the school opening next semester.

"You could do what you want with them at 800-1, 000 yuans," he added. I told him I was not interested and he left.

Seconds later, another smartly dressed Chinese man with a cell phone approached me with the same offer. Again, I declined.

What used to be condemned as the byproduct of exploitative capitalism plied in the open. There were no Red Guards to nab the wrongdoers. No vilification campaign to humiliate them. No reeducation camp to throw them into or purge them of moral decadence.

China's socialism is now only an economic principle, no longer a pervading precept that used to control every facet of a citizen's life. Indeed, freedom has its drawbacks.

At the core of "Mano Po 2" is the importance of family and home. But home is also a place inside each of us where memories find a sanctuary.

My memories of China at the end of the 1980s have been orphaned by the reality of China today. Nothing I say about the China of the past matches what I find in the China of the present.

I guess I'll have to find a new home for my memories of the new China.

Asia Media Festival opens today

THE ASIA Media Festival (AMF) 2003, an annual media-industry fiesta hosted by the Media Development Authority (MDA) and organized by Reed Exhibitions, opens today in Singapore.

Some 7,000 participants are expected this year—4,000 from the trade industry and 3,000 from the public.

More content and activities have been added to the three media events—the Asia Television Forum, Asia Film Market and Conference, and Asia Animation—on Dec. 2-5 at the Shangri-La's Rasa Sentosa Resort.

New highlights include a policy forum, participation from the Tokyo Foundation, a new conference track on digital cinema and a bigger and better networking party.

The organizer has also brought in leading names of the television and film programming industry across the world, including Alliance Atlantis Entertainment Group, Australia; Rozon/Just for Laughs, Canada; Betafilm gmbH, Germany; Star India Pvt Ltd. India; Granada International, UK; and Lakeshore International.

Key topics include financing and funding, exploring new delivery streams through convergence, promises and pitfalls of digital cinema, the growth and evolution of Asian animation, moving into new markets.

Lim Hock Chuan, the MDA's chief executive officer, said: "The Asia Media Festival was a success last year. This year, we are determined to grow it further as a must-attend event for the media industry, where thousands of executives from the TV, film and animation industries gather to network, source for new media products and close deals. The MDA will continue to host the festival as it adds to the vibrancy of the media scene, moving Singapore another step closer toward our vision as a global media city."

There are new highlights in the festival.

The AMF and Animation Superpitches 2003 contest on Dec. 2 and 4, in which program producers and production houses can pitch their best concepts to a panel of commissioning editors and broadcasters from around the region.

The full-day Conference on *animé* and *manga* will be held on Dec. 4, with leading animation production companies in Japan such as Toei Animation, Shogakukan and ComixWave.

A public symposium on *animé* and *manga* will also be held on Dec. 5 at Suntec Convention Centre.

A panel discussion on telecommunication regulation will take place on Dec. 5. Discussants include Kip Meek of the US Office of Communications, Michael Cosgrave of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, and Loma Wang of the Hong Kong Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority.

The Kodak Screenings will showcase the works of nine Asia-Pacific filmmakers, including those from the Philippines, on Dec. 4.

The 8th Asian Television Awards will be given out on Dec. 4.

The Anti-Piracy Summit 2003 on Dec. 5 will focus on the key issues of intellectual-property piracy and its impact on the cable, satellite and broadband industries.

The Hive Film Festival—The Digital Show, a film festival of local and international digital feature and short films, will be held until Dec. 3.

The Animation Camp at the Singapore Science Centre is a three-day camp to expose upper primary-school children to traditional, clay and toy animation as well as special sound effects and motion capture techniques.

Pasig marks tenor's centennial

By Pablo Tariman
Contributor

PASIG City music lovers led by Mayor Soledad Eusebio and Vice Mayor Lorna Bernardo came in full force to the Pasig Museum for the centennial tribute to the late tenor Octavio Cruz the other Sunday.

The late tenor's children led by lawyer Avelino Cruz (one of the founding partners of the Accra law offices and president of the Asean Law Association) and Rodolfo Cruz (president of Hong Kong Securities) spoke on behalf of the family.

It was a fitting tribute to the late tenor. The audience gave the artists—tenor Nolyn Cabahug, baritone Noel Azcona, soprano Joan Cano, flutist GJ Herman Gomez and pianist Mary Anne Espina—a standing ovation at the end of the concert.

Azcona was earlier heard at the Pasig Music Festival in April and got very favorable notices. This time, the baritone got euphoric bravos after singing arias from "Don Giovanni" and "Mephistofele."

Another fascinating new talent was soprano Joan Cano, also from University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music. Her rendition of "Oh Let the Bright Seraphim" (from Handel's "Samson") and Juliet's aria from Gounod's "Romeo et Juliette" gave a glimmer of a Joan Sutherland in the making.

I gave her an audition performance earlier in the house of filmmaker Marilou Diaz Abaya in a special concert for a visiting Japanese film critic. I have not heard such a brilliant rendition of Mozart's "Vengeance" aria in a long, long time. The voice is fresh and the vocal agility is amazing. With more coaching, she can be a sensation.

TENOR Nolyn Cabahug, soprano Joan Cano and baritone Noel Azcona at the Pasig Museum tribute to tenor Octavio Cruz

The tribute to Octavio Cruz assumed a special meaning with the performance of Cabahug, who sang six heavyweight arias from "Elisir d' Amore" ("Una Furtiva Lagrima"), "Tosca" ("Recondita Armonia"), "Turandot" ("Nessun Dorma"), "Carmen" ("Flower Song"), "Pagliacci" ("Vesti la Giubba") and "Aida" ("Celeste Aida").

I have not heard the tenor sing those pieces in a long, long time. I must say the voice has acquired a special dimension and, at some points, I thought I was listening to the venerable Alfredo Kraus.

Notable performers

November registered other notable performances like:

Flutist Hae Won Shin as soloist of the Manila Symphony Orchestra II in Mercadante's Concerto for Flute and Orchestra and a special orchestral arrangement of Sarung Banggi (arranged by Redentor Romero) and a Korean folk song, Kum Kang Mountain, by Yeong Sup Choi. The flutist has singular focus and a musicality that must have been derived from an Oriental musician's sense of calm.

Marimba player Deny Fernandez with the Philippine Philharmonic in a special performance of Creston's Concertino for Marimba and Orchestra, Op. 21. Fernandez showed the stunning range of marimba, a neglected instrument in Manila's concert halls. From the enthusiastic way the audience reacted to her encore piece, Fernandez must have won a lot of marimba converts.

Young artists in Bulacan

Elsewhere, we covered the opening ceremonies of the Namcya (National Music Competition for Young Artists) Young People's Music Festival in Malolos, Bulacan, and observed some positive developments.

The local government, headed by Gov. Josefina de la Cruz, is making a special effort to bring young Namcya talents to the attention of the countryside, hosting hundreds of participants.

National Commission for Culture and Arts chair Ma. Fina Yonzon spoke of the need to consistently nurture and support young talents which, NCCA commissioner Ramon Santos agreed, was started by former First Lady Imelda Marcos.

"Scorpio Night" actor Daniel Fernando (a Bulacan provincial official) emceed the affair with Novy Anne Principe. They were referred to in the program as *"Tagapagpadaloy ng Palatuntunan."*

Namcya winner Diomedes Sarazza Jr. rendered a violin arrangement of Velez's "Sa Kabukiran" and encored with Novacak's "Motto Perpetuo," receiving cheers during and after performance.

What I like to point out is that Namcya winners need to be treated well by securing for them a decent instrument for accompaniment. In his first piece, Sarazza was accompanied by a Casio electronic piano the size of two encyclopedias. The pitch of the electronic piano certainly didn't quite match the violin. Certainly, it was no way to treat a first-rate talent.

There must be a way of limiting participants in opening ceremonies to provide more space for the audience. As it were, most seats were taken by participants with very few left for the audience.

But the partnership of Namcya and NCCA with Gov. de la Cruz was indeed fruitful. Here's hoping both artists and audiences get fair treatment in both programming and access to decent musical instruments in future editions of Namcyá festivals.

NAMCYA winner Diomedes Sarazza Jr. in Malolos, Bulacan

UST singers with professor Fidel G. Calalang Jr.

Internationally acclaimed choir in pre-Christmas concert

THE MANILA Chamber Orchestra (MCO) Foundation, in cooperation with Equitable PCI Bank and 98.7 DZFE, closes the "MCO Arts Festival 2003" with a special pre-Christmas concert featuring the internationally acclaimed University of Santo Tomas (UST) Singers.

This event will be held on Dec. 7, 4 p.m., at the Francisco Santiago Hall, Mezzanine, Equitable PCI Bank, Tower 1, Makati Ave. corner HV de la Costa Street, Makati City.

The program will include pieces by Mendelsohnn, Pearsall, Lauridsen, Federizon, Francisco Santiago.

The UST Singers, founded in 1992, is the university's premiere mixed-chorale ensemble composed of a select group of students and alumni representing the different faculties and colleges of UST, under the baton of Prof. Fidel G. Calalang Jr.

In the course of 10 years in the international music scene and nine concert tours that have brought them to various countries, the choir has achieved both national and international recognition as one of the best choirs in the world.

In 1995, they won the Choir of the World grand prize in Wales, making them the first and only Asian choir to date to attain the honor.

Tickets are priced at P300 each, with special discount rates for students, faculty and senior citizens. Call 8181403 or 8407000 locals 2830 and 2258.

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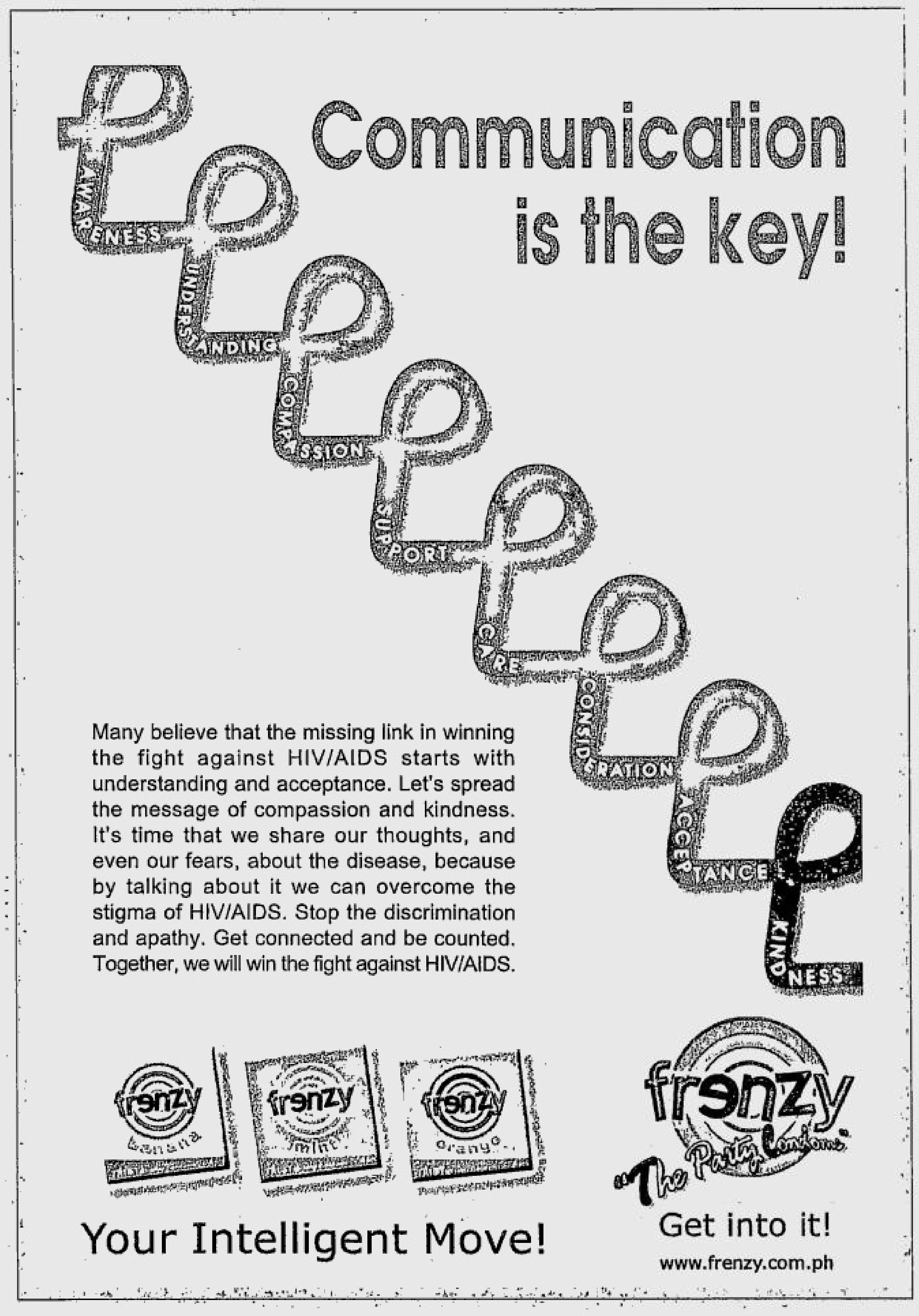

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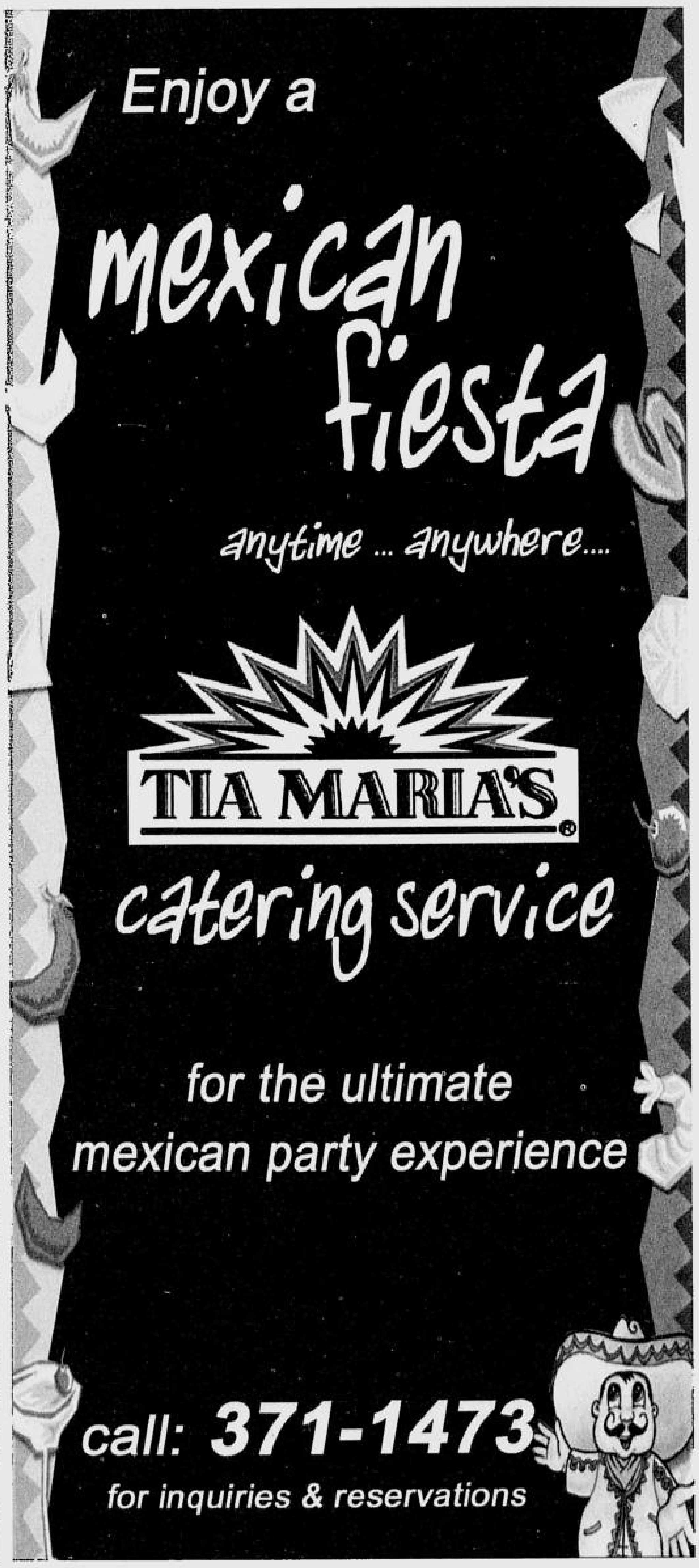

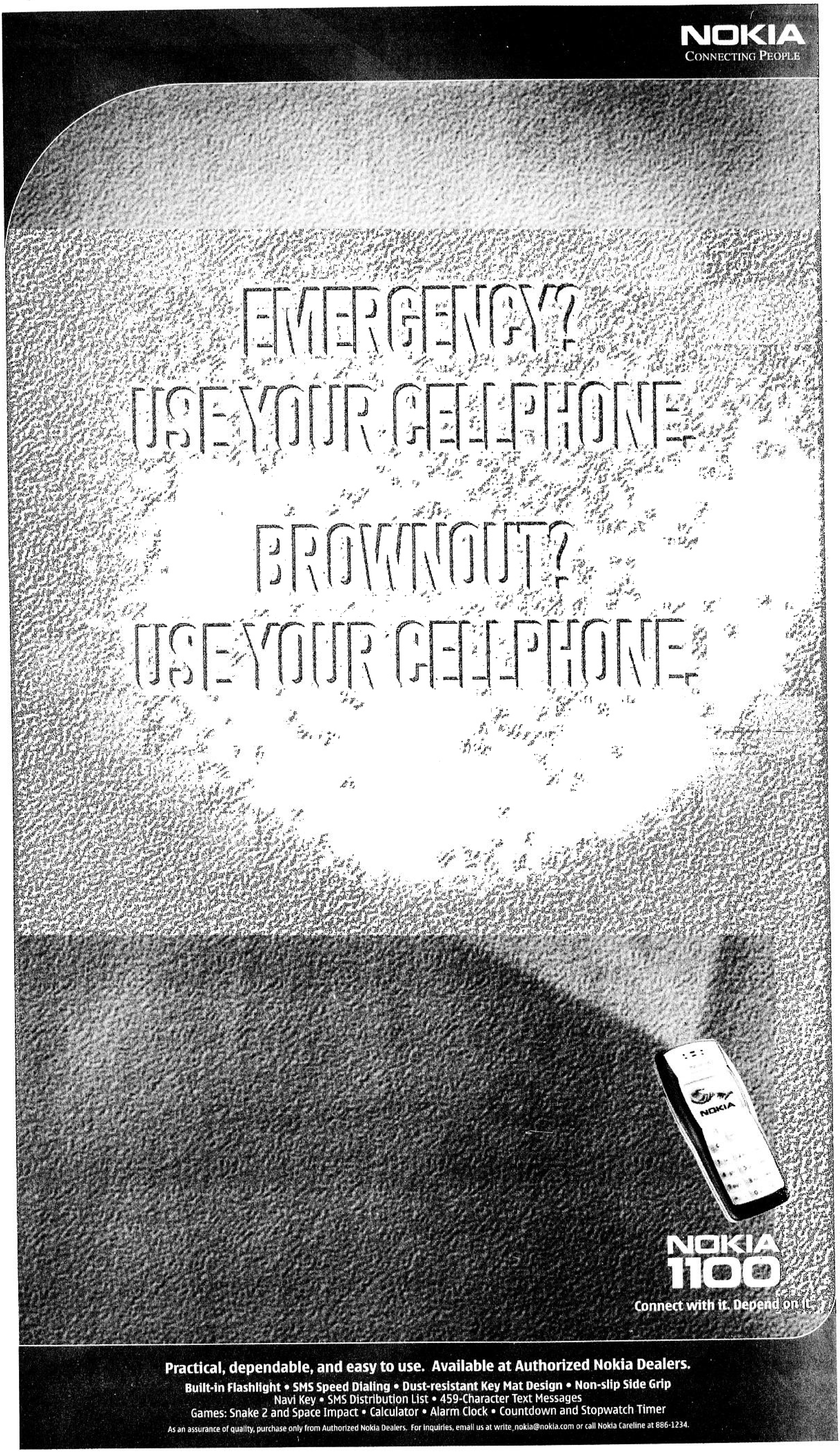

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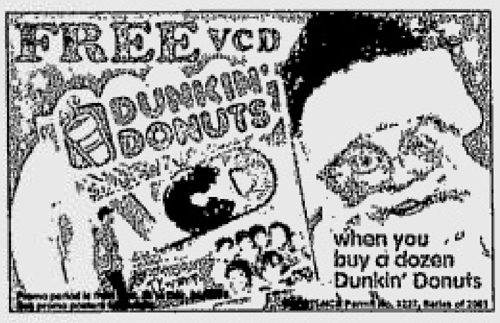
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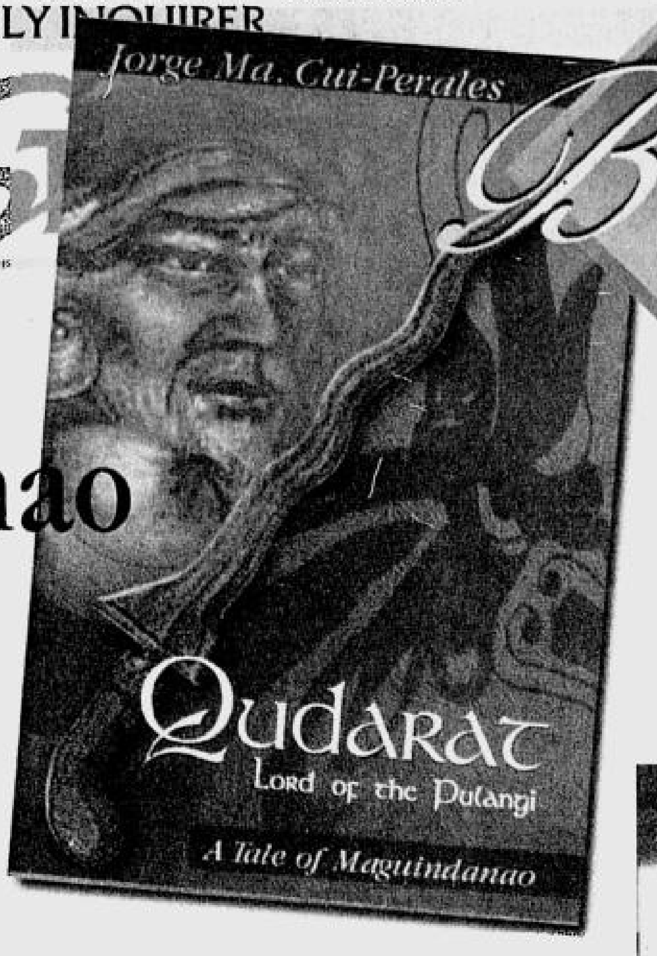
Novel gives life to historic Mindanao Muslim figure

A historical fiction on Qudarat comes when the Mindanao landscape is raging



By Christine Godinez-Ortega
PDI Mindanao Bureau

REVIEW

A LEGEND during his time and 332 years after his death, Mindanao hero Qudarat is now the subject of a novel. Also known as Kudrat and Corralat, he was the son of the Kaptan Laut Bwisan, a great-grandson of Sharif Kabunsuan, who was responsible for the spread of Islam in Mindanao.

"Qudarat: Lord of the Pulangi" (University of Santo Tomas Publishing House with the UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies, 2001, 214 pages) is published posthumously since the author, Jorge Ma. Cui-Pelares, had died in 1997 in Vancouver, Canada.

In the novel, Cui-Pelares maneuvers historical details to recreate Qudarat's rule as "Sultan sa Mindanao" over practically the whole of Mindanao (except for Dapitan, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro and the Caraga) with his *kampilan*, diplomacy and above all, Islam, in what Cesar Majul in "Muslims in the Philippines" calls an "ideological force" to resist the conquest and proselytizing by the *Kastilas*.

In making Qudarat larger than life, Cui-Perales envelopes the historic figure's birth with mythic proportions, telling us that he was born on the night the Makaturing mountain erupted to the accompaniment "of great flashes of lightning and fearful peals of thunder." During this birthing, the island shook "like an animal in pain," causing the Pulangi river to overflow. Several nights after that, "a brilliant fiery light" was seen across the skies, hence the name, Qudarat, for "lightning" and "power."

Basing his novel on historical records, Cui-Pelares recaptures regional pride at a time when the government is drawing up a peace treaty with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front whose base had been the heart-land of Qudarat's kingdom; and, where a descendant, Datu Michael Mastura, who might find this novel socially necessary, figures in laying out the groundwork for peace.

The events are chronologically arranged according to the five decades Qudarat ruled Mindanao and based, in turn, on the Islamic calendar AH (Anno Hegirae or the year of the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina) and the Gregorian calendar AD (Anno Domini or Year of our Lord).

The events are seen through the eyes of Banua, son of a Tagalog slave and a Tiruray mother. Banua rose from being a messenger to become one of Qudarat's *kaptans* (captains) and a dubious ambassador.

Although written in the narrative tradition, Cui-Perales' ability to make vivid the heroic figure of Qudarat is admirable. He succeeds in showing us Qudarat's perfect understanding of Spanish colonial ambitions in Mindanao; of his bravery in battle, eluding capture and suffering only one military defeat from the Spanish Gov. Gen. Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera; and, as a very intelligent man, his refusal to be deluded with peace overtures by the Spaniards.

Factual

For the most part, the novel narrates factual historical events that can be checked out from the list of sources the author supplied in his preface.

It is refreshing for an author to use Islamic calendar dates to frame his narrative. When Corcuerra arrives in Samboangan (Zamboanga) in Chapter 21, for

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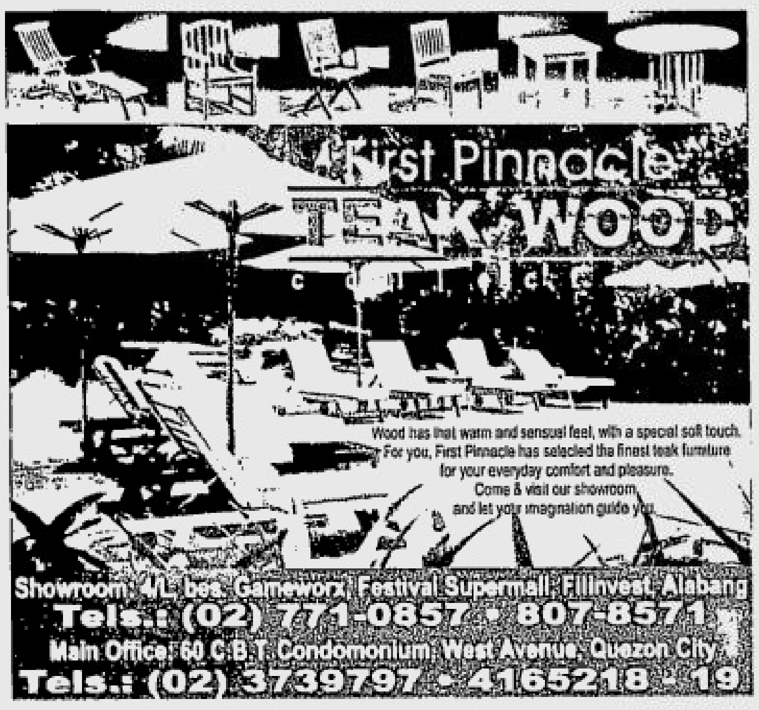
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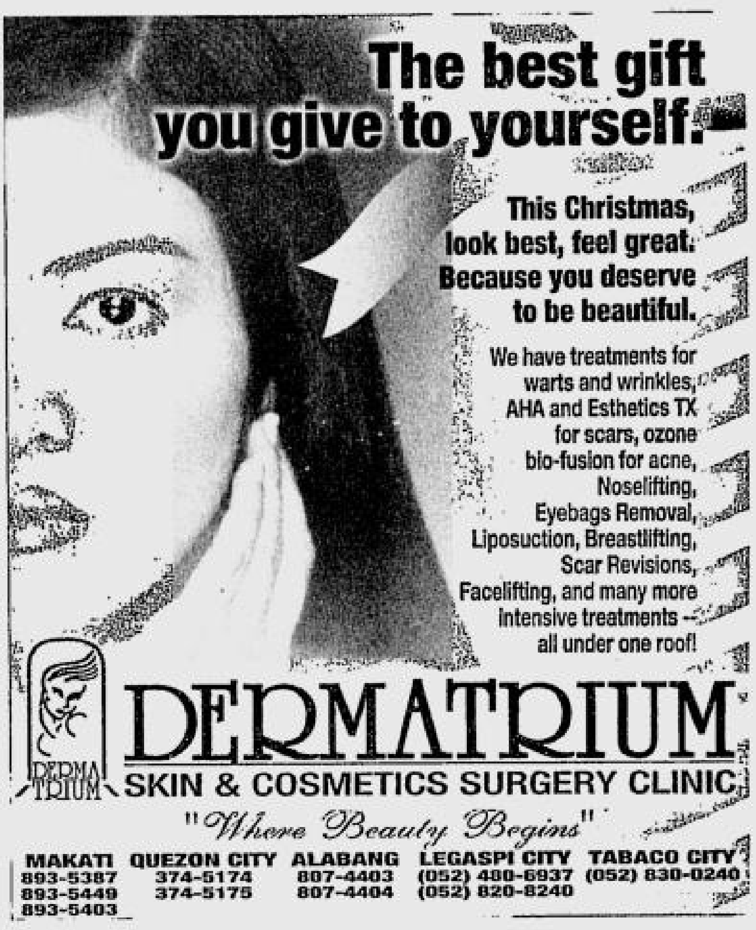
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Coffee-table book maps out artists' creative roots

By Zardo A. Austria
Contributor

TOYM recipients collaborate in introducing a new way of looking at art

ONE of the most refreshing approaches to an art book is made by Manuel Duldulao in the coffee-table book "Art Across the Philippines" featuring selections from the collection of art patron Carlos "Chuckie" Arellano.

Instead of the usual formulas to art presentation, the reader is given a new way of looking at art: regionally, which Arellano had in mind when he planned a museum of national and regional art at the Social Security System (SSS) when he was chair from 1998 to 2001.

The museum "intended to make clear how vital a creative spirit pervades all over the archipelago," Duldulao writes in his preface. The book and Arellano's private collection bring out that point clearly.

"Virtually all art is regional," says Duldulao. "It is work inspired by artists with creative roots in their respective hometowns... The vast range and diversity of styles found in the book was made in part to illustrate the geographic variety of Philippine art."

Sources of inspiration

Each artist's birthplace is clearly indicated on a Philippine map allowing the reader to immediately grasp the sources of inspiration, subject matter, color or "visual diversity" of the painter.

The method of underscoring diversity of talent by stressing an artist's roots was also used by Jane Stangle Alvero in her coffee-table book, "Folk Influence on Modern Philippine Art." Both books are available at Old Manila Bookstore, 4/L Megamall, Bldg. A.

BANKER, art collector and former SSS chair Carlos "Chuckie" Arellano

The 94-page Duldulao book is published by Peso Book Foundation, in association with Kabataang Pintor at Iskultor ng Pilipinas, Art Across the Philippines. It showcases 110 paintings from an eclectic collection that contains examples of contemporary art that "reflect our time."

Says Duldulao, "Acquiring recent art hot off the studios of the artists reveals a desire to relate to the spirit of his time and the human condition."

Emerging artists comprise the bulk of the collection. More art patron than just collector, Arellano often acquired a piece from an unknown but talented artist to encourage him/her. The young artists did get known eventually like Jose Madrilejos and his wife Josephine Neefe. Nestor Zabala, Adler Llagas, Ray Gomez and Arnold Arre are on the way up.

Duldulao says, "It is a tribute to Arellano's eye, to his courage, and to his avidity, that he has been able to acquire some first-rate pieces without spending fabulous sums of money."

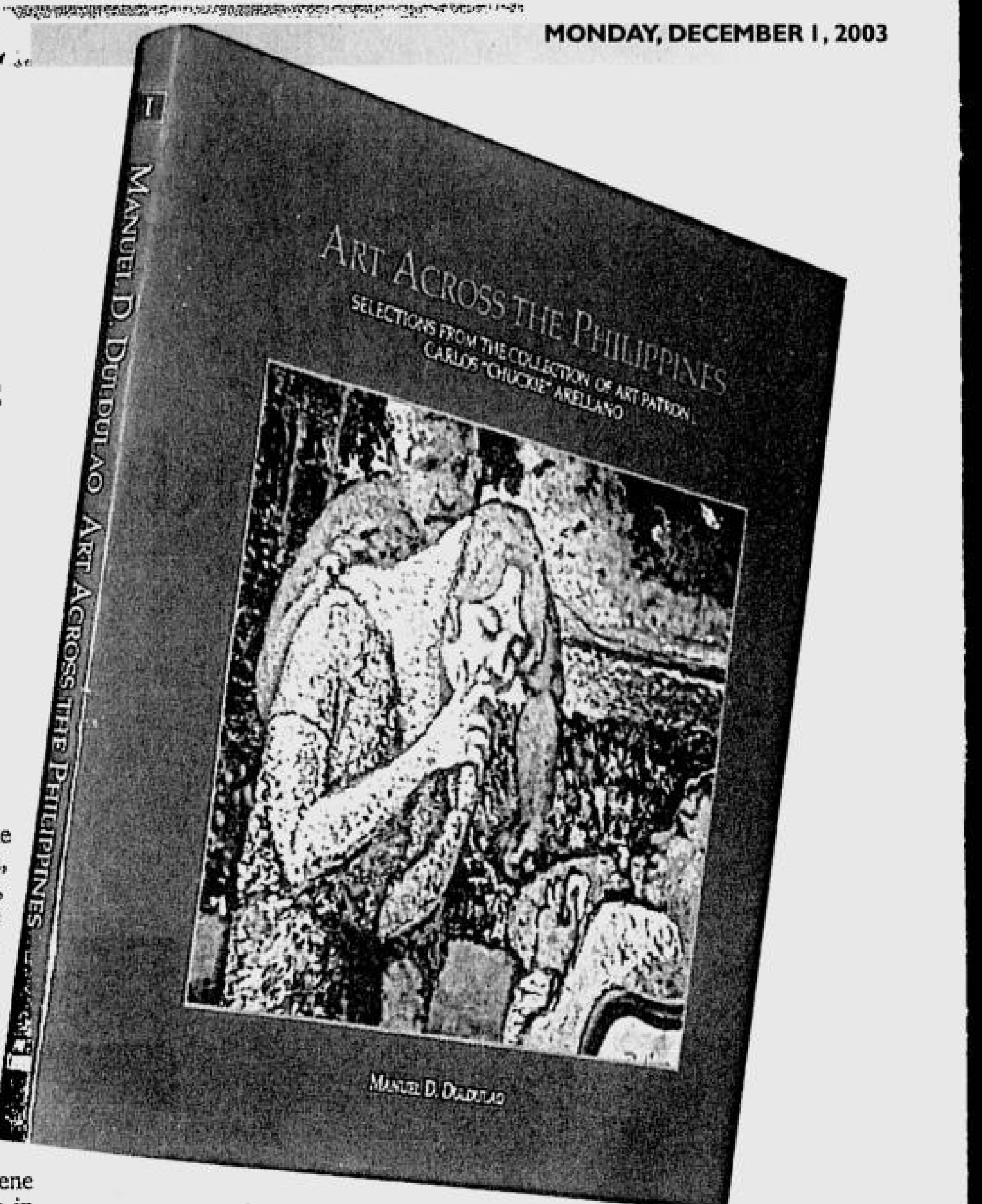
Works of masters

There are also famous names in the collection—Teodoro Buenaventura, Fernando Amorsolo, Victorio Edades, Vicente Manansala, Arturo Luz, Jose Blanco and Oscar de Zalameda. Also in the collection are works by his granduncle, the prominent architect Juan Arellano, considered by critics as the first Filipino modernist.

Arellano, who says "art is a community asset and I'm just here as a custodian," has donated works from the collection to the Ateneo Art Gallery. Two of the pieces (by Rene Robles and Emmanuel Garibay) are in the book.

Duldulao and Arellano were among the Ten Outstanding Young Men of 1972—Arellano for banking and finance and Duldulao for art and culture. They initiated some gracious, far-seeing gestures in the corporate world like the donation by a bank of the found Juan Luna collection.

Arellano, who was with the Far East Bank and Trust Company (FEBTC) for 37 years, initiated the bank's art acquisition program. In 1989, Duldulao learned that the missing Juan Luna collection was held in the United States by heirs of the late American wife of Luna's only son.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MANUEL D. DULDULAO ART ACROSS THE PHILIPPINES
ART ACROSS THE PHILIPPINES
SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTION OF ART PATRON CARLOS "CHUCKIE" ARELLANO
MANUEL D. DULDULAO

Duldulao offered the collection to Arellano and FEBTC, which acquired and donated it to the National Museum to mark its 30th anniversary.

The collection, now a major exhibit at the museum, consists of 130 oil paintings on panel and 47 oil paintings on canvas, plus 500 memorabilia items of the country's greatest painter.

Originally offered to the Philippine government for a song by the widowed Grace Luna de San Pedro before she returned to the US, the collection disappeared after her death.

Arellano descended from Deodato Arellano who co-founded the Katipunan in his residence on Claro M. Recto Avenue, and served as its first president (Andres Bonifacio was treasurer). His grandfather Arcadio was the first licensed architect of Manila, while his father Otilio, another architect, set up the World's Fair when it was held here. Arellano's sister Agnes, a well-known sculptor, put up the art gallery Pinaglabanan in the ancestral house in San Juan.

"Art Across the Philippines" is the 19th coffee-table book of Duldulao, a former advertising man. His "Contemporary Philippine Art in the '70s" was one of the first coffee-table books on Philippine art.

Tony-winning play at Republic of Malate

SEXY and controversial film actress Priscilla Almeda and seasoned theater stalwart-singer-commercial model Joel Trinidad will bare all in Leonard Gershe's Tony Award-winning romantic comedy and Broadway hit, "Butterflies Are Free," to be staged on Dec. 12, 13, 19 and 20 at 9 p.m. at the Republic of Malate Theater at 1769 A. Mabini Street, Malate, Manila.

Set during the restless and psychedelic years of the late '60s, "Butterflies Are Free" is about the search for personal freedom and coming to terms with one's self.

A blind, sullen young man leaves home with his doting mother endlessly following him along the perilous streets of lower eastside New York, while a free-spirited 19-year-old stage actress aimlessly tries to make both ends meet auditioning from one off-Broadway play to another, until they both meet and eventually fall in love.

Trinidad and Almeda play the two restless souls forever searching for life's meaning amid the city that never sleeps, while Linda Lupton plays Joel's overprotective mother and Richard Signey is making his theater debut as Priscilla's hip lover-producer.

PRISCILLA Almeda, Linda Lupton and Joel Trinidad star in Dramatis Personae's production of "Butterflies Are Free."

Produced by Dramatis Personae, the play is directed by DP artistic director and Palanca-awardee Lito Casaje.

Tickets are available at all Ticketnet and Ticketworld outlets (all SM Department Stores and National Bookstores), Republic of Malate, Araneta Coliseum Ticket Booth, Robinsons Department Stores, Tower Records, Music Museum, Greenbelt 1, Landmark Department Store, CCP Box Office, all Casaje Optical Branches and Glorietta 1.

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Novel gives life to historic Mindanao Muslim figure

From page G1

instance, he writes: "On the 19th day of Rabi'ulabhir in the year 1055 Hegira (Feb. 22, 1637 AD), Gov. Corcuera arrived in Samboangan with three hundred *kastila* and tagalog soldiers."

In the next chapter, the narrator begins: "No Maguindanao, Iranun or Maranao will ever forget the year 1055 Hegira (1637 AD) for it is written in blood in our history. It was the year of our great humiliation!"

The date March 18, 1637, which is mentioned by the author as the date when Qudarat was wounded, is likewise cited by other historians, among them Francis Madigan in "The History of Cagayan de Oro," as the date the Spanish forces defeated Qudarat in Lamitan. In the novel the equivalent date is given as Jumadi'lawal 16, 1055 Hegira.

But according to John Walker's Calendar Converter (www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar), March 18, 1637 AD is Shawwal 21, 1046 Hegira.

Apparently, Cui-Pelares failed to consider that the Islamic calendar, which is a lunar calendar, is about 11 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar and, therefore, shifts with respect to the Gregorian calendar. Every three years, the Islamic calendar starts a month earlier than the Gregorian calendar and gains a year every 36 years.

It appears that the author converted the Gregorian calendar dates to Islamic calendar dates on a one-to-one basis. For example, Jumadi'labhir, the seventh month in the Islamic calendar, is mentioned several times for different years but is always given as equivalent to April.

But one can still enjoy the novel by simply disregarding the Islamic calendar dates.

Silences

Those familiar with Mindanao history could see how Cui-Perales imagined the silences of history (for example in De la Costa's "Jesuits in the Philippines 1581-1768"), narrating why Qudarat ordered the killing of the priest, Juan del Carpio, during a raid in Ogmoc (Ormoc), an event De la Costa merely summarized in his book.

Conversely, De la Costa provides the historical explanation why Banua, became bitter at the shabby treatment he received from the Spanish authorities in Samboangan when he travelled there on his way to Manila as Qudarat's ambassador. De la Costa explains that Banua had "referred insultingly to the image of Saint Francis Xavier" and had struck in the face the resident missionary there, Fr. Miguel de Pareja. He also "told the Lutaus plainly that the days of peace were numbered."

De la Costa likewise describes Banua as "a boor." If art imitates reality, this can explain Banua's attitude toward *kristianos* in the novel whom he pejoratively and repeatedly calls *kapirs* (unbelievers). But, if, on the other hand, art improves nature, we also see Banua redeem himself from his alleged "boorish self" as the fiction endows him with a certain dignity later on.

A *pandita* (religious teacher) and therefore steeped in the teachings of Islam, Qudarat is conscientized by the killing of the priest in Ogboc. He makes sure that other priests who come to his *istana* (palace) in Lamitan or those who travel around the Pulangi River and the Cotabato basin are treated with respect by his subjects until this magnanimity is tested again when his own son, Gaudin, converts to Christianity; and, when Padre Lopez accuses Qudarat of violating the peace treaty and urges him to convert to Christianity.

Qudarat deems this an insult and abuse of hospitality which "could only be washed off by blood," an oft-repeated sentiment in the novel drawing us to the significance of Qudarat's maratabat (pride) of race and moral/religious ascendancy. This business of washing off insults by blood wrinkled the fabric of human cultures especially during those violent-prone times.

This novel helps accord proper place in history to those who were never conquered. Cui-Pelares, among our few historical novelists, has shown us the richness of our past, a past that we can proudly teach our young, and something our creative writers and film/TV producers can explore. Unless we have writers like Cui-Pelares to glorify our own heroes, we will soon find our country the dumping ground for foreign movie and TV heroes glorified in exploits signifying nothing.

"Quadarat: Lord of the Pulangi" is available at Solidaridad and other bookstores. Call 7313522 or 7313101, locals 8252 and 8278.

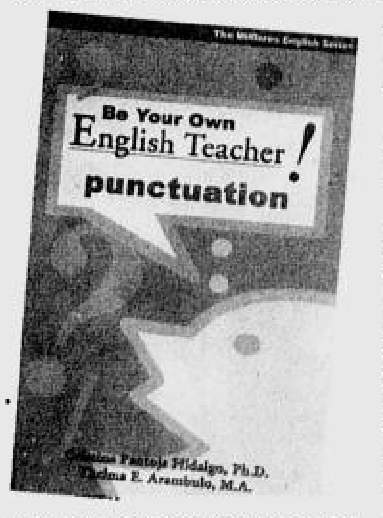
Book offers guide on punctuation

MILFLORES Publishing, Inc. has released "Be Your Own English Teacher! Punctuation" by Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, Ph.D. and Thelma E. Arambulo, MA.

The self-study guide to English punctuation is the second volume in the Milflores English Series that offers practical, reader-friendly lessons in the English language especially designed for Filipinos.

The guide book underscores the importance of correct punctuation: "Punctuations do for the reader what road signs and traffic signals do for the driver. They tell you when to slow down, when to stop and what to expect along the way. Reading a book with no punctuation would be like driving through a busy city with no signs or signals."

The Book carefully explains the appropriate uses of all important punctuation marks like periods, commas, question marks, colons, semicolons, hyphens, dashes, apostrophes, parentheses, ellipsis points, etc.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punctuation
Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, Ph.D.
Thelma E. Arambulo, M.A.

Hidalgo has a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and an MA in Comparative Literature from the UP, and a Ph.B., magna cum laude, from the University of Santo Tomas. She was formerly director of the UP Creative Writing Center and is currently director of the UP Press and coordinator of UP's Creative Writing Program.

Arambulo has an MA in English from the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and an AB in English, magna cum laude, from St. Theresa's College in Cebu City. She is the chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature at UP Diliman.

The guide to punctuation is available at all National Book Stores, Powerbooks and other leading bookstores nationwide.

New UP building inaugurated today

NATIONAL Artist Virgilio Almario, Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte and Sen. Francisco Pangilinan are among the special guests at the inauguration of the new University of the Philippines College of Arts and Letters (CAL) Building at 2:30 p.m. today.

Attending the inauguration are UP president Francisco Nemenzo, UP Diliman chancellor Emerlinda Roman and former UP Arts and Letters deans Vivencio Jose, Josefina Agravante and Rosario Torres-Yu.

The new building, located behind Bulwagang Rizal (Faculty Center) and the Jorge Vargas Museum, was constructed largely through the support of Nemenzo, Roman, Belmonte, Pangilinan, Senate President Franklin Drilon, Sens. Edgardo J. Angara and Robert Barbers, former Sen. Santanina Rasul, alumni and friends. The Philippine Daily Inquirer also helped.

Coincidentally, the college is celebrating its 20th Anniversary.

UP CAL has organized a number of activities to mark its anniversary. These include the opening of the UP Creative Writing Institute Writers' Week Exhibit and Discussion on the works of National Artist Virgilio Almario at 3:30 p.m., Dec. 1, right after the building inauguration.

At 3:30 p.m. the following day, there will be a discussion on the works of National Artist Francisco Arcellana. Discussions on the works of National Artist NVM Gonzalez will be held at 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 3, of Bienvenido Lumbera and Amelia Lapeña Bonifacio at 2:30 p.m., Dec. 4, and of Alejandrino Hufana at 2:30 p.m., Dec. 5.

Also scheduled are book launches, a reunion of the UP National Writers Workshop alumni and the gala premiere of the Dulaang UP production of Moliere's "The Imaginary Invalid" at 7 p.m., Dec. 5, Wilfrido Maria Guerrero Theater, Palma Hall.

Anybody for factual writing?

"Creative Ideas for Nonfiction"
Paulina Flores-Bautista
PUP Press, 2003. 60 pages

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

IN HER latest book, Paulina Flores-Bautista, a retired professor of journalism who has written both nonfiction and fiction, brings to the fore her wealth of knowledge and long experience as a leading educator.

This is a short book in which every page seems to count, and it is wide-ranging. In the first part, the author discusses the types of nonfiction (biography, article, essay, record of events), points of view (from First Person to Dramatic) and the process of preparing nonfiction materials.

In Part II, Dr. Bautista focuses on mass media writing (for posters, leaflets, booklets, brochures, comics and magazines), and finally, on scriptwriting for audiovisual materials.

In recent years, with the blurring of distinctions between literature and journalism, writing prose nonfiction has become almost like writing a novel or short story, the important difference being that the writer of fiction uses his/her imagination. He, as Hemingway once pointed out, invents from what he knows. On the other hand, the writer of nonfiction is (or should be) guided by the facts.

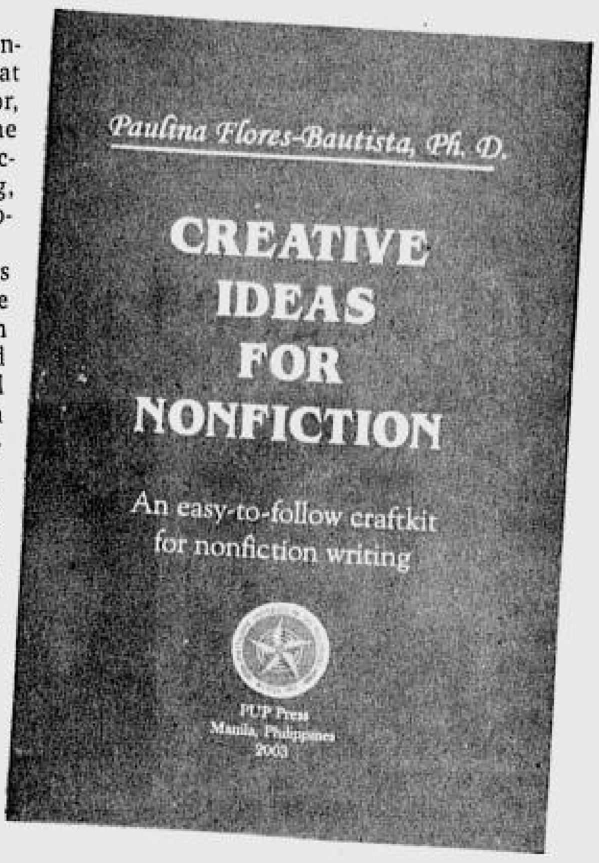
However, the information being disseminated by the author in this book can be applied to good writing and good communication in general.

"The key to becoming a better writer," says Bautista, "is to think of writing as part of a larger system and to view better writing as a means to 'some higher end.'"

The writer of nonfiction decides what his output is for, keeping in mind the three broad functions of informing, persuading and motivating.

"Good writers know that effective writing can inform and persuade and motivate, and all three happen with impressive regularity," Bautista notes.

Publicity stories for newspapers should have real news value. "An editor may disagree with you in defining the word," the author warns the earnest contributor. "He may, in the way of editors, refuse to run an item which to you is the story of the century."


Paulina Flores-Bautista, Ph. D.
CREATIVE IDEAS FOR NONFICTION
An easy-to-follow craftkit for nonfiction writing
PUP Press
Manila, Philippines
2003

And a newspaper editor may refuse a story that a magazine editor will accept, or vice-versa. The news story then, must contain real news value (or human interest, one might add), news of consequence to the reader of the publication and be written in an accepted news style.

Longer and more leisurely are the feature stories usually published by the weekend magazines. The author suggests an interesting lead paragraph, which should be developed "pleasantly" and end, if possible, with a "twister."

This kind of article or essay "needs a balanced diet of facts, statistics and other information that contains anecdotes, drama, humor, horror and the how-this-affects-a-real-person."

As for writing nonfiction scripts, the writer must first recognize the fundamental fact of teamwork.

"It is usually team work—between you and the artist—that will result in effective visual aids, properly executed for maximum impact upon your viewers/readers," Bautista points out.

"Creative Ideas for Nonfiction" is recommended for students, aspiring journalists and masscom writers, and public relations practitioners. Even the veteran writer might benefit from a pointer or two (or several) here.

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MEGASTAR Sharon Cuneta with Ronald McDonald at the canister donation drive launch at McDonald's Makati Cinema Square.

BENEFICIARIES of 1st Bahay Bulilit perform the world theme song with young talents Nadia and Adan, (not in photo is Conductor Pamfilo Baroja.

World Children's Day at McDonald's
September 20, 2003

Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte with Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman, Ronald McDonald, and Rev. Fr. Federico Fabien during the ribbon cutting of the third Bahay Bulilit.

A special gift for the children

"MCDONALD'S has a special affinity for children," so said Kenneth Yang, president of Ronald McDonald's House of Charities (RMHC).

Proofs of this commitment are RMHC projects that benefit the children. Recently, McDonald's celebrated World Children's Day in not just one but three festive and star-studded events.

These efforts kicked off Nov. 20 during the grand opening of the third RMHC's Bahay Bulilit in Barangay Sto. Cristo in Quezon City.

Government luminaries led by Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman and Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte led the opening to the delight of the children and parents in the *barangay*. Two Bahay Bulilits launched last year are located in Pasay and Mandaluyong.

"The Department of Social Welfare and Development and local government units uphold the convention of the Rights of the Children," Soliman said. She is just as glad that RHMC has these projects to help the victims, abandoned, and neglected children in various areas.

Belmonte noted the most important resource of the country, which are the youth. "I am glad that RHMC—and the private sector—help the government in protecting the welfare of the children," he said.

On the second day of McDonald's celebration of World Children's Day, respected show biz personality Sharon Cuneta came to the ceremonial launch of its Canister Donation Drive at its outlet in Makati Cinema Square.

"I am proud to be associated with the McDonald's family," Cuneta said, who has been the food chain's endorser for the past seven years. In her message to the youth, Cuneta stressed the need for them to prepare for their future, "and do your best to help in every opportunity."

Donation gathered will fund the future Bahay Bulilits that the company is set to open in different parts of the country.

Cuneta gamely posed for pictures with kids of Bahay Bulilit. Six-year-old Kyle Andrew Marquez graced the cover of the canister distributed in all McDonald's outlets nationwide.

To cap off this worldwide celebration of World Children's Day, a charity dinner was held at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. Executives, employees, suppliers, government and other personalities attended the fund-raising event that will help build more Bahay Bulilits in the country.

Popular singer Lani Misalucha sang a number of inspiring songs to the 400 guests.

"I believe in McDonald's mission of helping children all over the world," Misalucha said.

Yang is one person who shows a firm commitment in not only giving back to the community where they do business, but in setting an example that will make a better world for the children.

SVP LEILA Hernandez, Ronald McDonald, and RMHC Maager Butch Salaya present the P-5M check raised from the Charity Event Show.

TEXT BY MARLET D. SALAZAR
PHOTOS BY EGAY MONTANA
PAGE DESIGN BY ALIZZA BUTIONG

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SAGAY City school principals and community leaders

DR. Marilen Marañon with FWWPP president Maria "Butchie" Lim-Ayuyao

EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Women power revolution in sugar land

By Butch Hernandez
Contributor

SAGAY is a city near the coastline of Negros Occidental. Its laid-back ambience easily distinguishes it from its more cosmopolitan sister, Bacolod City, over an hour away to the north.

Susan Javelosa and Dr. Marilen Marañon are two well-respected women of Sagay. Susan is married to City Mayor Fortunato Javelosa while Marilen is the better half of Rep. Alfredo Marañon.

The women lead the Sagay Ladies Circle, Susan as president and Marilen as adviser. With other civic-spirited women of Sagay, Susan and Marilen had undertaken community-focused projects since the Ladies Circle was formed.

Early this year, Marilen learned of the Education Revolution from the Foundation for Worldwide People Power's Beth Cabuguas, an Ilongga herself. Marilen did not immediately warm up to the idea of adopting a school. That's a tough job, she said to herself. As a congressional spouse, Marilen was no stranger to the problems besetting our public schools today.

Pretty soon, however, the caring nature that Ilonggas are famous for began to kick in. Susan and Marilen found themselves drawn to the idea of helping nurture the schoolchildren of Sagay through a community-driven school adoption program.

THE CARING women in sugar land: the Sagay City Ladies Circle

City joins revolution

The Sagay Ladies Circle immediately buckled down to work, talking to other people in the community, gathering information and organizing themselves.

Then the Sagay Ladies Circle invited FWWPP president Maria "Butchie" Lim-Ayuyao and executive director Butch Hernandez to see for themselves how the Education Revolution had come alive in the city.

For starters, the Sagay Ladies Circle adopted eight schools.

These are Barangay Bato Elementary School and High School under principals Rogelia Daluyaya and Ma. Theresa Bingcang, respectively, the Lopez Jaena Elementary School under principal Amparo Libo-on, the Maria Lopez Elementary School with principal Amapola C. Longakit, the Jose B. Puey Sr. Elementary School under principal Helen B. Gargar, the Alfredo Marañon Sr. Elementary School led by principal Jezebel M. Garcia, the Cabiguhan Elementary School under principal Nilfa O. Braza and the Sagay National High School led by principal Milagros Mainit.

SAGAY City DepEd superintendent Mildred Garay

SAGAY City Ladies Circle president Susan Javelosa

The amiable district superintendent, Mildred Garay, ably represented the Department of Education. In fact, she led the eight school principals in expressing their gratitude for the Education Revolution in Sagay City.

Judging by the crowd at the very modern Balay Kauswagan Training Center, Butchie could tell that the whole community had gotten into the act.

Civic groups like the Lions Club led by Percival Salvador and the Sagay "Sigay" Jaycees with Vivencio Flores at the helm joined in. So did Marcel Irisari, the Parents-Teachers-Community Associations Federation president, and the Nestor R. Bayona of the Local School Board's education committee.

Dr. Marilen Marañon still feels that adopting a school is a tough job. But she and Susan, and the rest of the Sagay Ladies Circle are the first to admit that as women, the joy that comes from nurturing the schools and the children in their community is well worth the effort.

The author is the executive director for Foundation for Worldwide People Power

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Anthology of grandma stories to be launched

"APARADOR ni Lola" is a book that recreates true scenes from a prior generation through treasured souvenirs, thus its subtitle, "Past Lives, Precious Objects."

Through affectionately crafted essays, 17 writers from varied backgrounds each tell a story of unique bonding with his or her grandmother, their memories propelled by keepsakes found in ancient armoires or plain utilitarian closets.

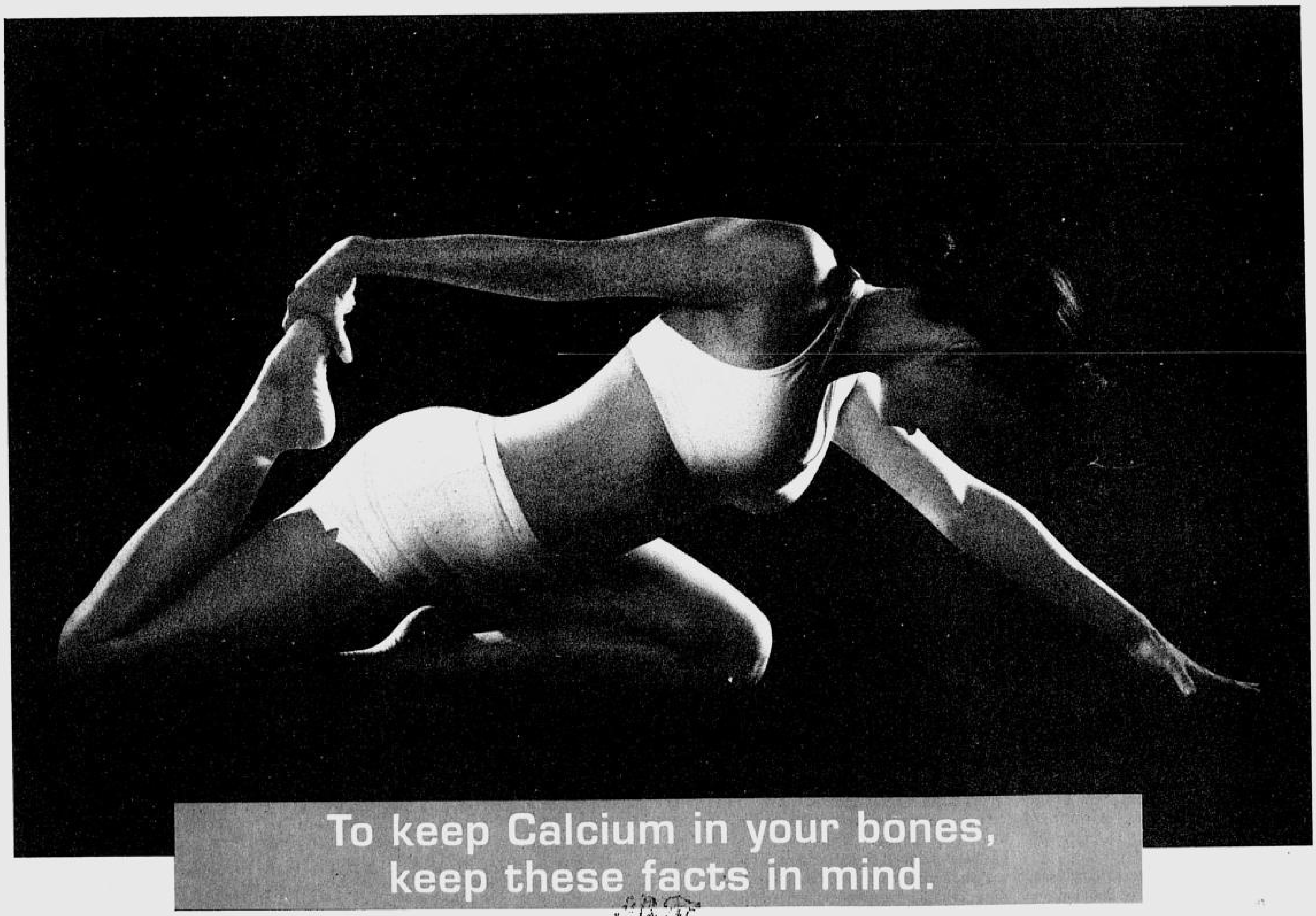
Anvil Publishing Inc. launches this unique volume on Friday, Dec. 5, 6 p.m. at PowerBooks in SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

Journalist Emmie G. Velarde, who edited the anthology, hopes the book will result in a renewed appreciation of the elders in the family, whether or not they are still around to acknowledge it.

The writers are: Myrna Almario-Adriano, Monique L. Buensalido, Tess Cerojano, Lolita Delgado-Fansler, Des Ferriols, Abe Florendo, Bill Formoso, Jeannie E. Javelosa, Jose F. Lacaba, Mary Lou Lacson-Arcelo, Babeth Lolarga, Elvira Mata, Floy Quintos, Jose Javier Reyes, Anna Leah Sarabia, Marily Ysip Orosa and Velarde.

Their grandmothers' stories are told in anecdotes that are sometimes funny, sometimes sad, sometimes dramatic and sometimes light, but always recalled with enriching hindsight and unqualified love.

"Aparador ni Lola" will be available in all National Bookstore and PowerBooks outlets.



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Dapitan makes heritage its pride and blueprint

The beautiful seaside city is set to become the pacesetter in cultural mapping and planning

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

DAPITAN in Zamboanga del Norte is a tropical paradise whose images belong to glossy travel posters. Palms sway in the balmy breeze of the seaside city, setting a leisurely pace for the city's laid-back lifestyle.

The mountain range around Dapitan embraces the bay where the town is situated. Only a 20-minute drive from Dipolog, the government and economic capital of the province, Dapitan is a peaceful enclave that has been spared the haphazard and chaotic development that characterizes Philippine cities. There are no airports or dirty harbors, nor are there malls, commercial strips, fast food restaurants, or garish architecture. Since all of that visual pollution and urban chaos is relegated to its neighbor, Dipolog, Dapitan has preserved its genteel, old-world ambiance.

Its primary asset is the unmistakable national name recall of Dapitan. Each Filipino learns in school that national hero José Rizal spent four years in exile there. Rizal gives Dapitan its identity, establishing it as a unique place where Philippine history unfolded. That is what makes it different from all other Philippine cities. The old-world ambiance of Dapitan reinforces its historic setting.

The other Philippine city associated with Rizal is his birthplace, Calamba in Laguna. Although a replica of his family house and a museum in his honor exist there, he is a forgotten memory in his home town. In Dapitan his memory lives on. He left so much physical evidence of his stay in the town. Tracing the surviving evidence of his stay in Dapitan provides an understanding of the kind of a person he was.

Rizal traces

Although a political exile, he was not locked away in a stockade. Dapitanons welcomed Rizal, took him into their community and made him a part of their lives.

He mingled with the people, provided medical treatment and helped in the education of their children. He left a mark on the Dapitan plaza. The trees he planted are now fully matured trees. People still come to see the grass-covered relief map of Mindanao he laid out in front of the Saint James Church. He even designed an irrigation and water distribution system that is the basis for the present distribution system.

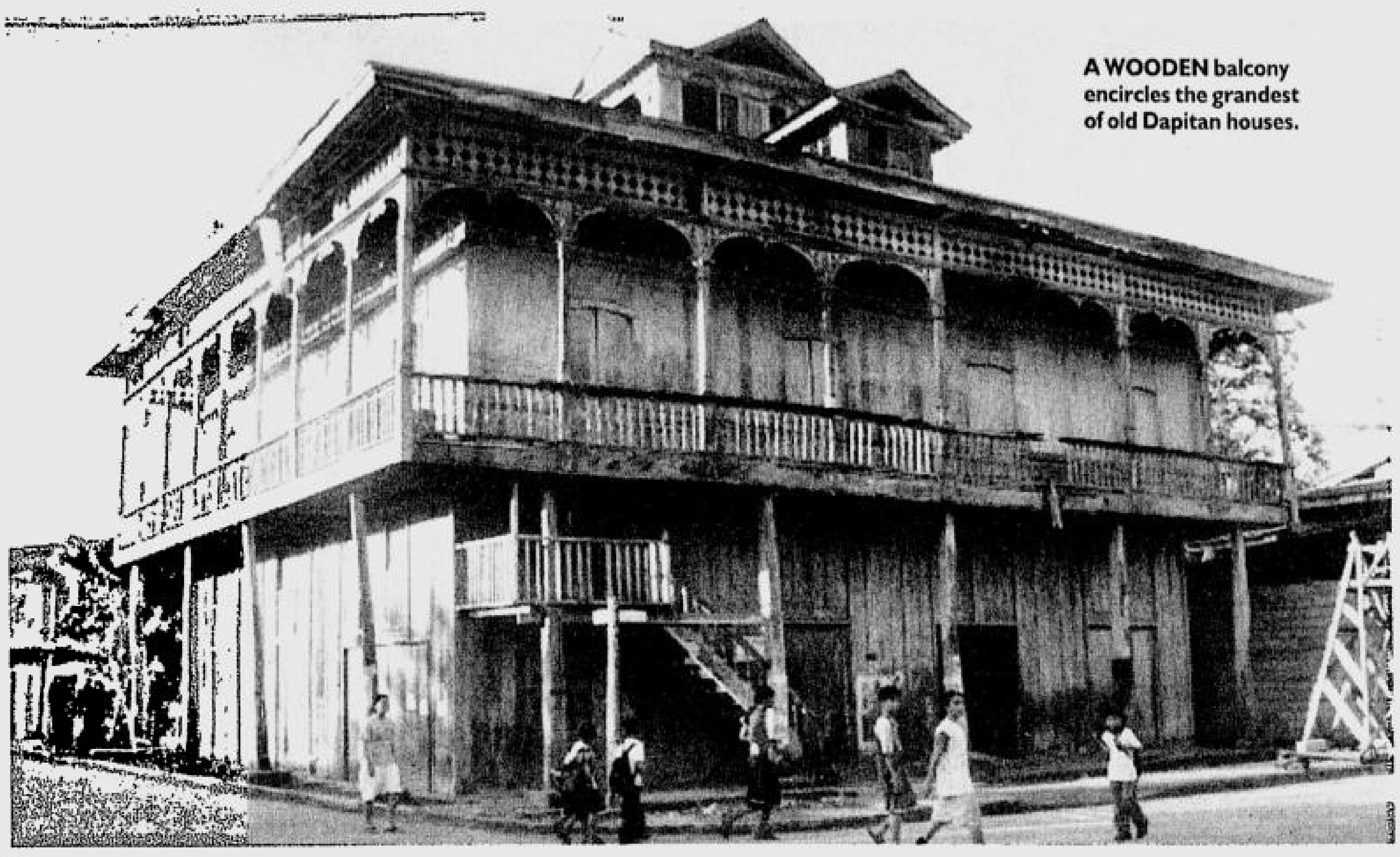
In the beachfront farm where he lived, is the Rizal Shrine maintained by the National Historical Institute. It is at the end of the city's Sunset Boulevard by the bay at the edge of Dapitan.

At the shrine, carefully crafted replicas of his *nipa* residence and the octagonal clinic structure where he gave free treatment to local patients stand in the coconut-shaded garden. The rock formation where he took the afternoon air and watched spectacular Dapitan sunsets with Josephine Bracken still exists. Everything about the Rizal Shrine tells of his four-year idyllic respite in Dapitan.

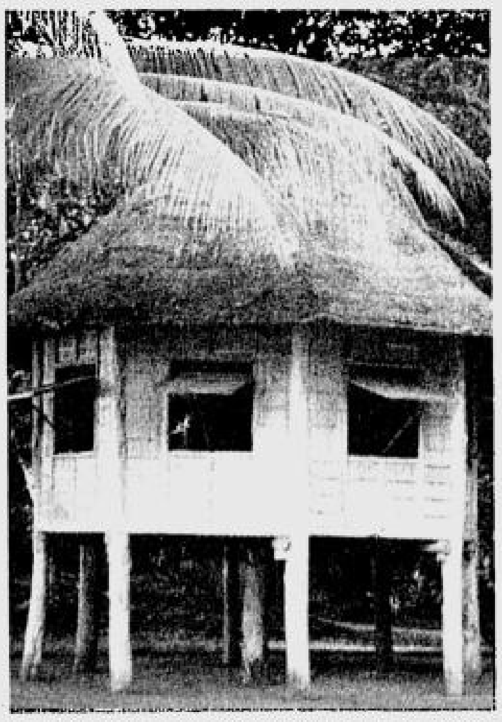
In the upland portion of his property, Rizal diverted streams, made dams, and laid out a network of irrigation canals so he could farm.

The dwindling twilight generation still

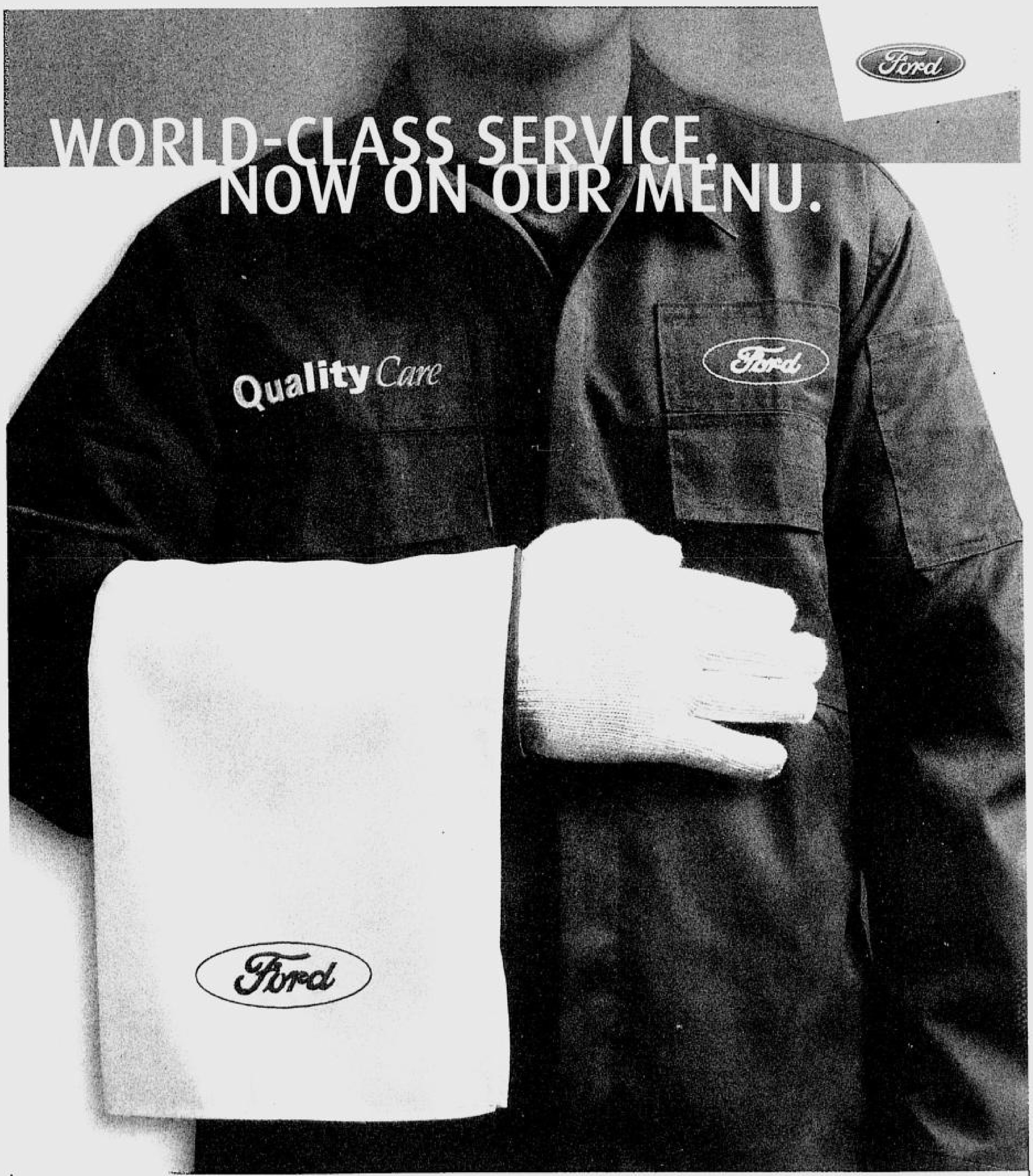
DAPITAN/ H2



A WOODEN balcony encircles the grandest of old Dapitan houses.



CASA Redonda, the octagonal *bahay na nipa* at the Rizal Shrine is the clinic where the hero treated Dapitanons for free. But the idyllic view of Dapitan Bay from the shrine is seriously threatened by a plan to construct a concrete ampitheater on the beach.



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Museum of the Marian saga

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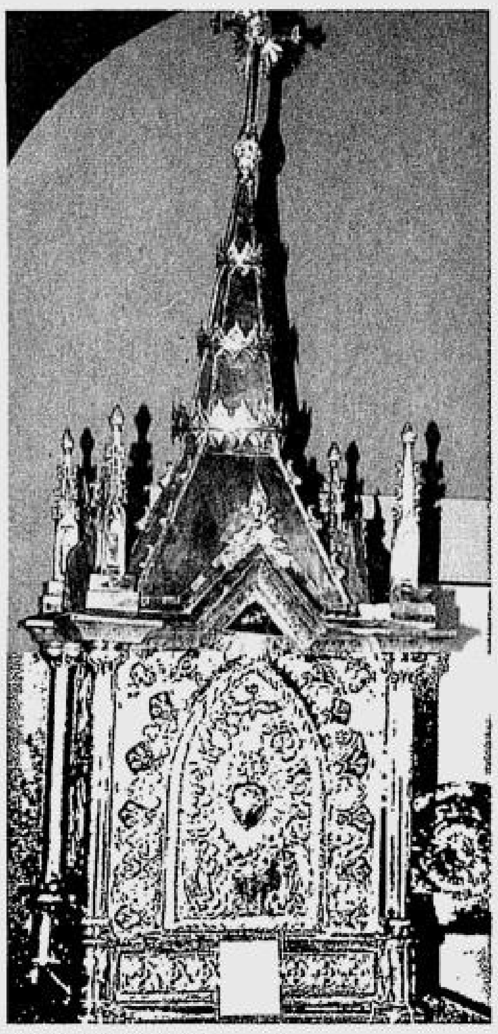


GOLD-PLATED tabernacle

EXQUISITE gowns for "La Japonesa," a Marian image with Japanese features

Text by Lito B. Zulueta
Photos by Rudy Esperas

WHEN Filipino Catholics celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8, they will be reminded of the depths of the Marian devotion that has fired and guided the nation through several centuries.

The intensity of the devotion cuts across geographies and generations, so much so that Marian feasts—the Peñafrancia of Bikol, the Manaoag of Pangasinan, the Caysaysay of Taal, the Buenviaje of Antipolo, the Turumba of Pakil, the Salambao of Obando, the Candelaria of Iloilo—have become the distinguishing marks of the islands, uniting disparate peoples into a singular whole, like diverse siblings so joined by their mother.

The *ikon* of the Blessed Mother under several guises and titles has been the object of so much faith and fervor that it has become, for lack of a better word, iconic.

So iconic has been the devotion that it has become a heritage in itself. The magnificent patrimony is evident in the Santo Domingo Museum, which houses and preserves the sacred icons, vessels, vestments and other appurtenances that have cohered around the Santissima Rosario, more popularly known by the martial title La Naval.

The museum was opened last October, the Holy Rosary month, by Fr. Herminio Dagohoy, OP, prior of the Dominican community of Santo Domingo and chaplain of the La Naval shrine. And since Pope John Paul II had declared 2003 as the Year of the Most Holy Rosary, the opening added luster to the celebration.

The Holy Father had declared Santo Domingo Church with its La Naval shrine as a pilgrimage site for Marian devotees. Thus, those who would visit the Church would get special blessings.

Original

It was not surprising for papal blessing and recognition to be accorded to the Santo Domingo Church. One of the original ancient churches in Intramuros, the Church has seen its fortunes rise and fall—and rise again.

Erected in 1588, it was gutted by fire in 1603 and destroyed by earthquakes in 1610, 1862 and 1863. Each time it was toppled, the Dominicans erected a more magnificent church, defiant as ever. The neogothic church that replaced the one toppled by the earthquake of 1863 was particularly noted for its majesty, easily the grandest in a district known for its grand churches.

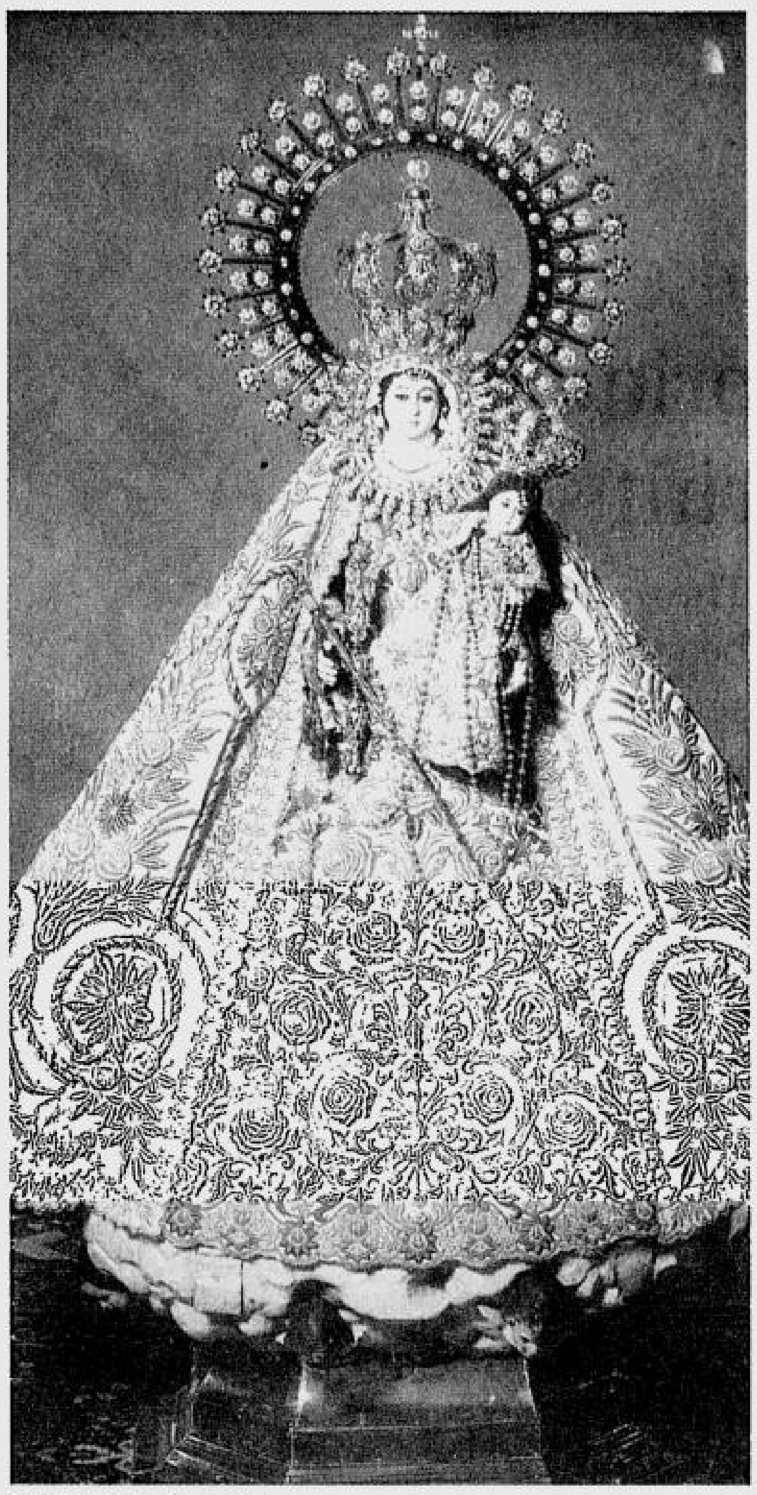
Before Jose Rizal left for Spain, he heard Mass there. And Nick Joaquin reserved his best baroque prose to exalt the church's dimensions and festivities.

When Japanese bombs leveled Santo Domingo to the ground in 1941, the Dominicans moved the church to Quezon City and built the church there, where it still stands.

The Spanish Moderne structure, designed by Jose Ma. Zaragoza, is easily one of the largest churches in the country and is distinguished by its unique appropriation of the Spanish colonial mission-house complex, its stained-glass windows designed by Galo Ocampo, its frieze depicting the La Naval victory and its giant sculpture of St. Dominic by the Italian sculptor Francesco Monti, and its murals by Carlos "Botong" Francisco and Antonio Llamas.

The church's colorful history is complemented by the La Naval saga. Gov. Gen. Luis Dasmariñas commissioned the making of the *ikon* and donated the image to the Dominicans in 1593. It is now considered the most beautiful image of the Blessed Mother made indigenously.

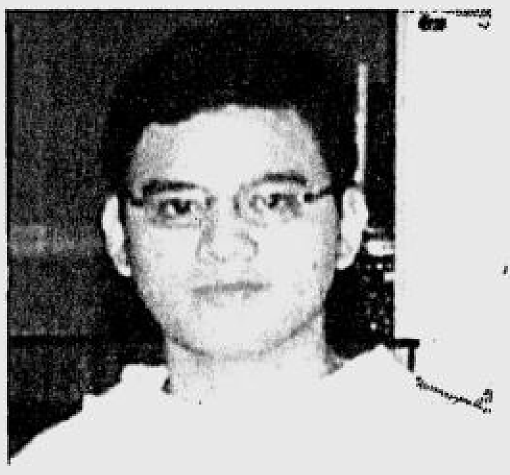
Because a Sangley artisan carved it, the image bears syncretic Oriental features. Considering, too, the native Filipino devotion to the Infant Jesus, the image carries the Christ Child, which has a beautiful face, fat cheeks and a plump little hand raised in blessing.



LA NAVAL in full regalia

DECOROUS monstrances used by the Dominican missionaries to expose the Blessed Sacrament to the faithful

SANTO Domingo prior Fr. Herminio Dagohoy, OP in front of ancient vestments used by the Dominican clergy



BROTHER Nilo Lardizabal, OP, spokesperson of Santo Domingo

The Santo Domingo Museum displays the lavish Marian patrimony of the Philippines

The statue is the biggest Marian *ikon* of its kind in the country. It stands 4'8" tall and is made even taller by its resplendent crown.

It is made of hardwood, but ivory covers the faces and the hands of Mother and Child. She holds a scepter and a 15-decade gold rosary that is draped around the hands of the Mother and Child. Both figures are clothed in exquisite royal dresses and mantles that are heavily embroidered with golden thread.

Gem-studded

Against the lace that encircles the head is a gem-studded halo. The bottom of the circle rests against the chest of the Madonna. Resembling a golden aura, both small and large rays, richly enhanced with jewels, extend from the circle. Both the Madonna and the child have splendid crowns.

As if that were not enough, Filipinos through the centuries have donated gems to enhance the image. The golden aura and the crown of the Madonna have been endowed with an even larger halo of gold, with jewels sparkling at the tips of 24 large rays and 24 small rays.

Part of the romance of La Naval is its martial tradition. In 1646, Dutch privateers aboard 15 warships tried to take the islands away from Spain. The Spaniards could only muster two rickety commercial galleons to confront the invaders.

Christened "La Encarnacion" and "La Rosario," the two ships carried Spanish and Filipino soldiers who did battle with the Dutch, but not after praying to the Santissima Rosario and making a pledge to walk barefoot to Santo Domingo church should they win against all odds.

In all of the five battles of La Naval, the defenders won handily in the face of so much hopelessness. In 1662, a canonical inquiry established that the feat was a miracle. The annual La Naval procession has since been reliving the glory of that miraculous victory.

It is in the context of this fervid devotion that the Santo Domingo Museum situates itself. Fr. Dagohoy explained that the patrimony had been there all along, but it took the modern museum consciousness to showcase the unique heritage of La Naval and Santo Domingo.

In a way, both fates are joined in a narrative of history: the struggles of Santo Domingo and the Dominicans, and the ever-widening devotion to the La Naval.

The magic and substance of the narrative remain relevant to Filipino Catholics, and should check any of the intolerance fostered by the Second Vatican Council against the traditional devotion to Mary and the saints. The iconoclastic revolution sparked by the Council has since been on retreat, and Catholic iconography has regained much ground. The heritage consciousness movement will only reinforce the revival.

For Bro. Nilo Lardizabal, OP, spokesperson of the museum, said the heritage shows the people's love for the Blessed Mother. He explained that some Catholics may balk at the magnitude of the devotion as displayed in the expensive gifts that have been showered on the *ikon* through the centuries. But they should be viewed in the light of love and fervor.

"One does not put limitations on one's devotion," he said. "One does not put limitations on expressions of love."

The Santo Domingo Museum is open on Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m to 12 nn, 1 to 5 p.m. Weekday visits by appointment. Call 7126271.

Dapitan makes heritage its pride and blueprint

From page H1

talks vividly of personal interactions with the hero. Almost every elder Dapitanon has a story of a personal contact with Rizal. One person said that her mother was Josephine Bracken's best friend. Another remembered that Rizal was an attending physician at the birth of his father.

So much oral history that tells of his influence in many Dapitanon lives has gone unrecorded. As a result the present generation has practically lost its connection to Rizal, the national celebrity who put Dapitan on the map.

Stronger position

The Dapitan government is claiming a stronger position for the city in the national map. With World Bank assistance, city hall is charting the city's future course of development using Dapitan's distinctive heritage resources as bases. When its Heritage Conservation Master Plan is completed, it will probably be the only Philippine city with such a plan. That sets Dapitan up as the pacesetter and as a role model in conservation for other cities to follow.

A project team of local and Cebuano architects, urban planners, and historians led by Maria Lourdes Martinez Onozawa walked each street of the city, photographing and measuring each piece of heritage architecture, interviewing residents to determine the personal history of neighborhoods and individual houses.

FANCIFUL wooden fretwork add an air of whimsy to an old Dapitan house.

To start the community planning process, members of each barangay mapped all of the cultural resources in their areas—heritage houses, monuments, open spaces and beaches, churches and chapels, public buildings, schools, libraries, going as far as to include forests and trees, traditions like the "komedya" and folk medicine, and old recipes.

As each barangay presented its cultural resources to the audience, the expressions on the faces of members lit up with a newly discovered pride of place. The people's cultural map provides a picture of the existing cultural resources, showing that there is more to Dapitan than what its residents thought.

It was the usual case that the community could not see how special their city and culture have always been. After having done a cultural mapping exercise, now Dapitanons can say with certitude that a cultural renaissance for the city is easily achievable. Dapitan has an excellent chance of achieving its goal of becoming "Shrine City." That will put it back on the map for sure.

The Heritage Conservation Society has published a handsome desk calendar for 2004 that features archival photos and short historical data on 12 well-known Philippine churches written by respected scholars. Proceeds will fund HCS projects for 2004. For more information, call the HCS Secretariat at 5222497 and 5212239.

E-mail the author at afvillalon@hotmail.com

Centuries-old town marks anniversary

By Pablo A. Trozado
Contributor

MAJAYJAY, an upland Laguna town nestled in the foothills of Mt. Banahaw, marked the town's 432nd founding anniversary in October.

The town, about a couple of hours drive away from Manila, had probably the most festive observance so far, the result of a month-long preparation headed by Mayor Tino Rodillas, Vice Mayor Binoy Merestela, councilors Cesar Urcia and Mario Nombrado; and Teddy Pontiveros of a local non-government organization.

The event started with a 6 a.m. Mass at the centuries-old San Gregorio Catholic Church. A grand parade followed, participated in by delegations from various sectors of the community who wore traditional costumes in keeping with the theme, "Halina Sa Kabukiran 2003." The celebration paid tribute to the town's basic source of livelihood—farming.

Some women carried trays filled with vegetables harvested from their barangays as well as *lanzones*, which the town and the whole province of Laguna are known for.

Gowns of native materials

Young women wore gowns fashioned out of native materials like *pandan*, *buri* and coconut leaves.

Guests included Metro Manila Development Authority chair Bayani Fernando and Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo. Also among the visitors were Laguna Gov. Ningning Lazaro, actor-turned Laguna Vice Gov. Dan Fernandez, Laguna Rep. Boyie San Luis, and Laguna provincial board member Emil Tionco, a member of the singing group Tionco Brothers, who sung '50s top hits.

AN ORNATE shack built by Barangay May-it

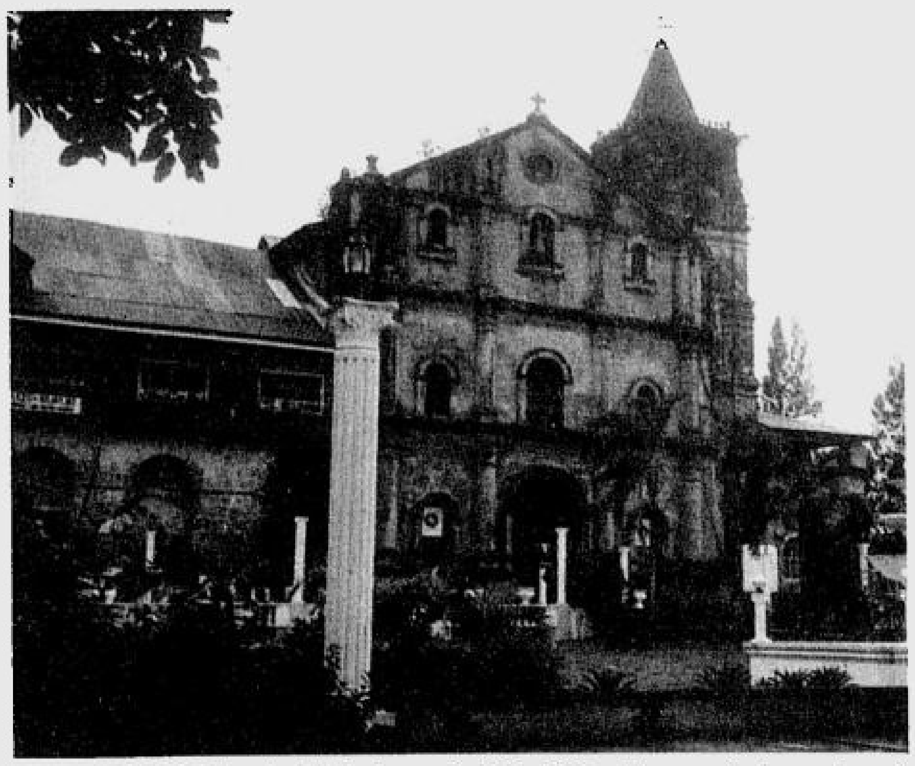
Majayjay was established as a town by the Spaniards in 1571

Folk dances were presented by local high-school teachers and students. A trade fair, set up by the town's 40 barangays, exhibiting a variety of farm products like *lanzones, guyabano, buko, lambanog* (coco-wine) and assorted vegetables. One barangay displayed a giant replica of bell pepper.

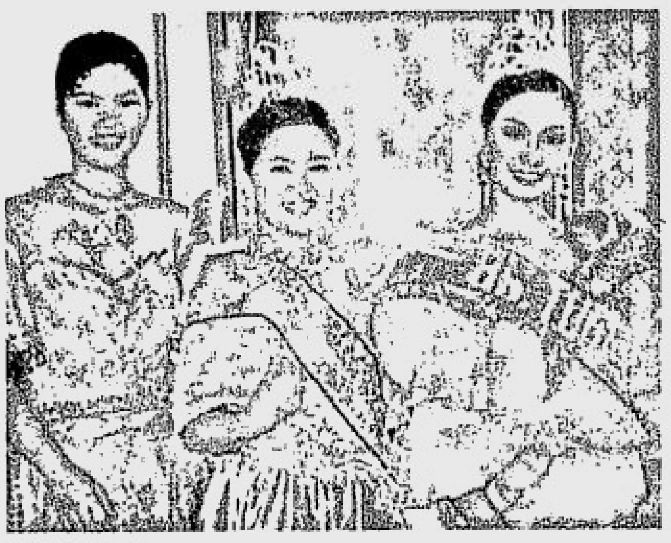
Majayjay was founded by the Spaniards as a town in 1571. The name was originally spelled Mahayhay. A cluster of structures are testaments to Majayjay's historic past—the San Gregorio Catholic Church, the "Ermita" enshrining the centuries-old image of Señora de la Ponteria and the Tulay ng Pigue (Bridge of Buttocks) built over the Olla river at the outskirts of the town.

The national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal, made several visits to the town while writing his novels "El Filibusterismo" and "Noli Me Tangere." Emilio Jacinto, the brain of the Katipunan, died of malaria in the town where he was commanding the entire revolutionary forces in Laguna.

The town's proximity to Mt. Banahaw assures it of a pleasantly cool climate almost the whole year round. Among its tourist attractions are waterfalls along the parts of the town that lead to the jungles of the mountain.



THE CATHOLIC Church of Majayjay was built in 1760 and has survived a number of powerful earthquakes and other natural calamities.



THREE Majayjay beauties wear gowns fashioned out of indigenous materials such as *pandan* leaves and *buri* fabric.

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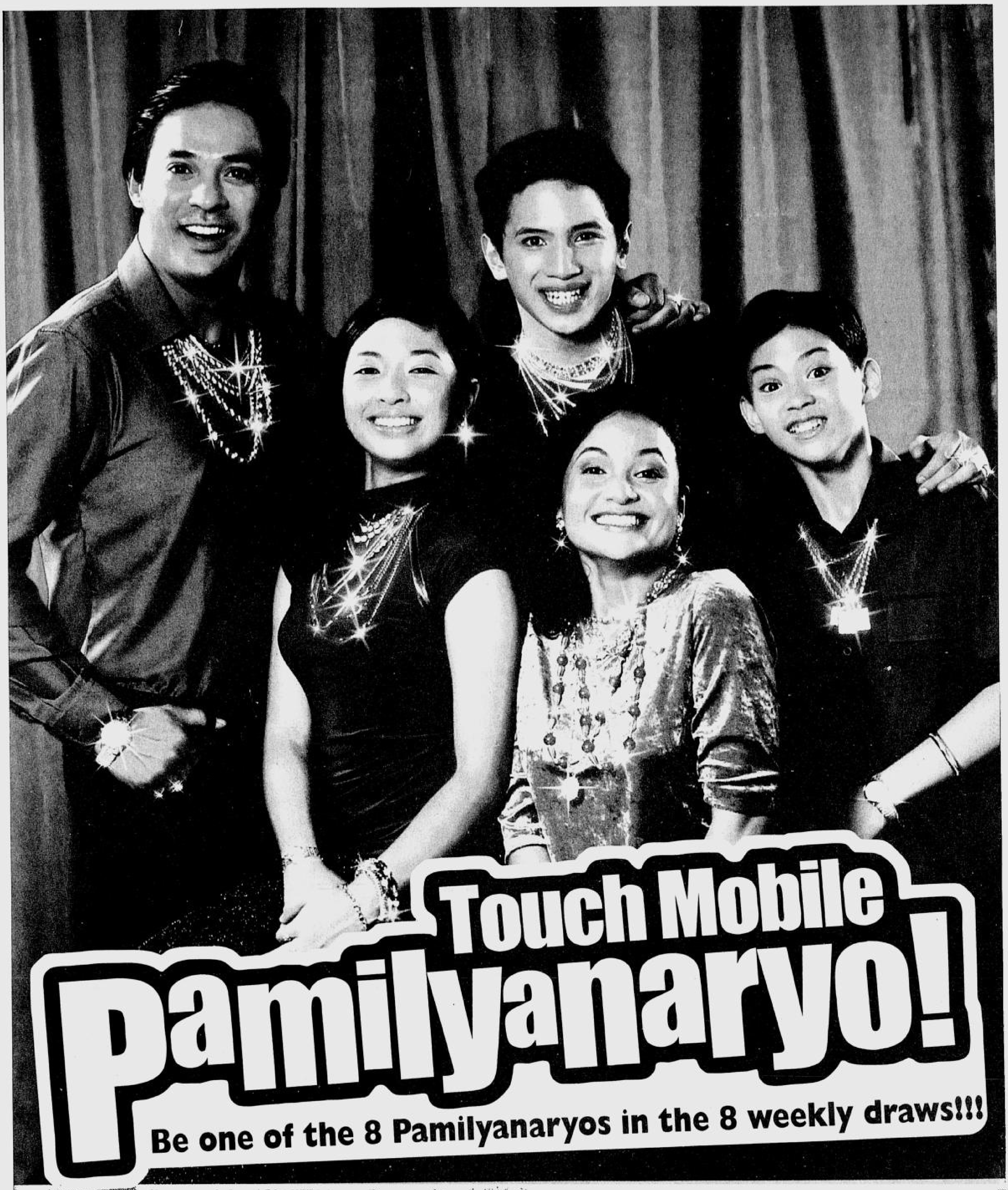

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1. Only those whose TOUCH MOBILE SIMs are active during the time of joining, winning and claiming of prize are qualified to join and win in this raffle.
2. This promo will run from Dec 1, 2003 till January 31, 2004.
3. There will be one (1) P1,000,000.00 cash tax-free that will be raffled off every week.
4. YOU NEED TO REGISTER TO JOIN THE PROMO. TO REGISTER, Type [reg][space] [your name][space] [your address] and send to 2206. Ex. "reg Juan dela Cruz 123 Mayon St. QC" and send to 2206. Registration is FREE. If you don't register, you won't be qualified to join the promo. You will only be able to earn electronic raffle entries after registration. Your Mobile number will serve as the raffle entry.
5. FOR NEW TOUCH MOBILE SUBS DURING THE PROMO PERIOD – After making your 1st call (or upon activation), and registering for the promo, you will instantly earn 12 raffle entries.
6. FOR EXISTING TOUCH MOBILE SUBS – You will need to register 1st before you can start earning electronic raffle entries with every reload you make.
7. After registration, all your reloads during the promo duration will earn electronic raffle entries. The higher the call card denomination loaded, the more electronic raffle entries earned. All reloads done in any channel will earn electronic raffle entries (plastic call cards, eLoad, BPI Autoload, AutoloadMax, Family Autoload, etc.)
8. The number of entries that can be earned is as follows:
   - Newly activated sub – 12 raffle entries
   - Activated by switching – 12 raffle entries
   - Ps 50 CC – 2 raffle entry
   - Ps 100 CC – 4 raffle entries
   - Ps 200 CC – 8 raffle entries
   - Ps 300 CC – 12 raffle entries
   - Ps 400 CC – 16 raffle entries
   - Ps 500 CC – 20 raffle entries
9. To find out how many entries you have accumulated, text in, "POINTS" and send to 2206. You will be charged P2.50 per inquiry.
10. To find out more about the promo, text in "HELP" and send to 2206 or call 808 using your Touch Mobile phones or 730-1500 using any landline.
11. The more reloads, the more number of electronic entries, the more chances of winning.

Start Date	End Date	Raffle Date
Dec. 1 (Monday) 12:00:00am	Dec. 10 (Wednesday) 11:59:59pm	Dec. 12 (Friday) 4:00pm
Dec. 1 (Monday) 12:00:00am	Dec. 17 (Wednesday) 11:59:59pm	Dec. 19 (Friday) 4:00pm
Dec. 1 (Monday) 12:00:00am	Dec. 24 (Wednesday) 11:59:59pm	Dec. 26 (Friday) 4:00pm
Dec. 1 (Monday) 12:00:00am	Dec. 31 (Wednesday) 11:59:59pm	Jan. 05 (Monday) 4:00pm
Dec. 1 (Monday) 12:00:00am	Jan. 07 (Wednesday) 11:59:59pm	Jan. 09 (Friday) 4:00pm
Dec. 1 (Monday) 12:00:00am	Jan. 14 (Wednesday) 11:59:59pm	Jan. 16 (Friday) 4:00pm
Dec. 1 (Monday) 12:00:00am	Jan. 21 (Wednesday) 11:59:59pm	Jan. 23 (Friday) 4:00pm
Dec. 1 (Monday) 12:00:00am	Jan. 31 (Wednesday) 11:59:59pm	Feb. 02 (Monday) 4:00pm

12. The weekly draws will be on Dec 12, 19, 26, January 5, 9, 16, 23 and Feb 2, 2004. Deadline of raffle entries and joining of the promo will be on January 31, 2004 at 11:59:59pm.
13. A specific Touch Mobile number can only win once (1x) during the promo period. A subscriber can technically win more than once (1x) given that the drawn Touch Mobile numbers are not identical.
14. All winners will be notified via phone call and registered mail.
15. To validate identity of the winner, he/she will be asked to bring his/her Touch Mobile phone with the winning mobile number and a valid ID. The Cashier or any Globe Telecom Rep releasing the cheque will do a test call to validate the Calling Line Identity (CLI) of the phone. The CLI of the phone should match the winning mobile number. And the registered mail should also be brought when claiming their prize. Any lost SIM's will disqualify him from winning.

*** All notified winners should still have their Touch Mobile SIM active until the time of claiming the prize. Prizes will be forfeited for those who lost their SIMS at the time of claiming their prize

16. Prizes not picked up from within 60 days from receipt of notice will be forfeited with prior DTI approval.
17. Employees of Globe Telecom, Innove, JimenezBasic Advertising, Starcomm and participating Globe Telecom Business Centers including their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.
18. Prizes are tax-free.

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